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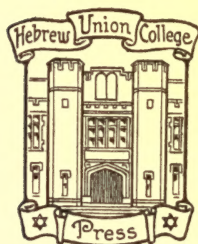




# INTIMATE GLIMPSES OF THE RABBI'S CAREER

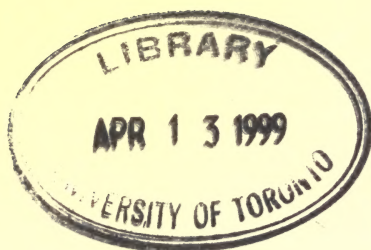
BY  
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"THE NEW EDUCATION IN RELIGION"  
"JUDAISM AND THE SOCIAL QUESTION"  
"SABBATH SENTIMENT IN THE HOME"  
ETC., ETC.



CINCINNATI  
THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE PRESS  
1921

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IN LOVING DEVOTION TO MY  
COMRADE FROM YOUTH;  
MY HELPMATE THROUGH LIFE;  
MY UNFAILING SOURCE OF INSPIRATION;  
MY WIFE.



## A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

BY DR. K. KOHLER,  
President Hebrew Union College,  
Cincinnati, Ohio.

I herewith gladly comply with the request of my dear friend and colleague, Dr. Henry Berkowitz, to offer a few introductory remarks to the series of lectures on the functions of the rabbi which he, at my invitation, delivered before the students of the Hebrew Union College in April, 1918, under the title: "Intimate Glimpses of the Rabbi's Career." These lectures are, at my suggestion, herewith presented to the public in permanent form. By the perusal of these pages the general reader will obtain an insight into the tasks and difficulties confronting the Rabbi. A sympathetic and helpful spirit of inspiration between Pulpit and Pew will thus be promoted.

These lectures certainly fill a serious gap in our Jewish theological literature. They will be welcomed by students and young rabbis alike as a valuable guide and a forceful incentive to the work of pulpit and religious school as well as to the general activities of the Jewish minister. They are the ripe fruitage of a rich life experience, and the outflow of the personality of one who, during his successful career as a leader of congregations, especially of the prominent congregation Rodeph

Shalom in Philadelphia, has always stood in the closest friendly relations with every member of his flock; is the trusted and beloved counselor and comforter of the homes and the advisor of young and old; one who has become an eminent spiritual force in American Jewry, owing to his sincerity of purpose and his large-hearted sympathy.

When, about thirty-five years ago, as one of the appointed examiners at the first graduation of the Hebrew Union College, I heard young Henry Berkowitz deliver his trial sermon as one of the four graduates who have made their mark by creating a new type of rabbi in accordance with the needs of American Jewry, he at once impressed me as the born minister of God with a deep religious soul. He has since proved to be a man of peculiar force and originality in the pulpit, one whose words render his hearers enthusiastic not by mere rhetoric nor by the wisdom and learning gathered from books alone, but by an eloquence which comes from the heart and goes to the heart. And back of the spoken word there ever stands the man, whole-souled, with keen interest in whatsoever is human, and indefatigable in his manifold endeavors to promote the cause of Judaism as a rabbi, as an educator of a high order, and as a communal worker.

Thus highly qualified to speak authoritatively on the fourfold topic he has so wisely chosen, he prepared these lectures with a thoroughness and rare insight that penetrated into the very core of things. They are worthy of the best academician. They aroused the highest interest and enthusiasm in the students and earned the



## A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

warmest thanks of the Faculty and the Board of Governors of the College.

But there was a special feature to lend charm to these lectures, and this was the discussion which followed each lecture. The students were requested by the speaker to submit questions on any phase of the topics considered. Thus were elicited many inquiries. These were met with striking and instructive answers, rich with illustrations drawn from the speaker's own large experience.

May, then, the lectures as presented herewith prove a source of inspiration and instruction to all who read them, as they were to us who heard them. May they find warm appreciation in wide circles, so as to induce many other speakers to follow the example of Dr. Berkowitz and Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, who preceded him with a course of magnificent lectures which, too, we hope to see in print soon. We are grateful for these noble efforts and rejoice that by their publication the curriculum of the Hebrew Union College is to be enriched.



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# I

## THE RABBI AS MINISTER

**A** SUGGESTION from the President of the Hebrew Union College, especially when indorsed officially by the Faculty and the Board of Governors, is, to me, equivalent to a command. In obedience thereto I am here to address you. The command is dignified and lifted to the rank of a notable distinction in that it accords to me the honor of sharing for a time the privileges of a member of the Faculty.

I am asked to bring you a message somewhat different, however, from that which belongs to the purely academic atmosphere of the class-room. For there are some subjects of vital importance to you which are not to be found in any text-book, and certain disciplines that cannot well be fitted into the curriculum. You have courses in "Homiletics" and "Rabbinic Activities," imparted under experienced and capable instruction. To the scholarly presentation of these topics given by your professors I am asked to bring the supplementary offering and reinforcement drawn from the experience of my thirty-five years of practical ministry. Perhaps it may be my good fortune to direct you to where you may be able to find some of those fountains of inspiration for whose living waters you will daily yearn when, after graduation, you take up singly and alone your

wanderings in the wilderness of an untried, untrodden, and unknown career.

"Intimate Glimpses of the Rabbi's Career" may reveal to you by-paths and thickets to be avoided and may possibly help you to clear a pathway of progress in your own individual journeyings. The field is so vast, and so great the enticements to ramble, that I have constrained myself expressly by these written pages in order to divide the time with you. I shall then be ready and eager to lead you on any excursion in the quest for what you yourselves find of most direct interest. I would have you survey your future career as rabbi in these four successive discourses from four distinct angles:

(a)—The Rabbi as Minister.

(b)—The Rabbi as Teacher.

(c)—The Rabbi as Preacher.

(d)—Ethical Problems of the Rabbi.

The first, most startling and somewhat bewildering experience of one who enters the rabbinical career is that of finding himself suddenly invested with a place of responsible leadership. In the college halls he was accustomed to follow definite and rigorously defined regulations, to submit to authority, and to find at hand sources of information and guidance for his every perplexity and difficulty. On the day that he receives his diploma the situation changes completely, for then he holds in his hand a signed and sealed testimony of equipment for office. "Hattarat Hora'ah"—"permission to teach and to decide"—takes on a living significance when, from the very moment of his entering upon

his office, he finds himself confronted with responsibilities he must himself assume. Thus, e. g., he is charged by the law with a grave responsibility in solemnizing marriages. Bound by the Jewish law and tradition in this and other functions, he must forthwith post himself on the civil law as well.

The congregation vests in him the direction of its religious affairs. He must decide, sometimes on the instant, matters of ritual and ceremonial observance no less than of principle. There is no congregation in which there do not arise open questions that are submitted to the rabbi's arbitrament. He must take a stand based on definite convictions. A man fresh from college, devoid of all practical experience and accustomed to take only the academic attitude on such matters, is likely to be bewildered and to err. Individuals look to the rabbi for guidance, and take his example as authoritative. The community at large defers to his rank and influence and looks up to him as the authoritative spokesman of the Jews. The public press, whether he wills it or not, exacts from the rabbi some Jewish pronouncement on every current issue.

Thus the rabbi finds himself at once the target of countless inquiries. The *Sheeltot* directed to rabbis under other conditions referred almost exclusively to *Issur v'hettar*, things forbidden or permitted, and limited to technicalities of religious observance. Those which assail a rabbi today in America are not thus limited, but have to do with the great issues of life in all its various phases. He is apt to be consulted daily on questions that refer to the training of the young, the problems of

the adolescent, the determination of a career, intimate matters of domestic relations, questions on the distinctively Jewish topics of the day, and all the educational, civic, and philanthropic problems that confront the community at large. There is no *Kol Bo* or *Vade Mecum* with authoritative replies to fit every need. Experience is the sole text-book and even it is not always conclusive. Books are but the records of the experiences and observations of others. Therefore, a rabbi must be primarily a student of books. However, written records are but pale reflections of actual life. Therefore he must be a student of life itself and avail himself of the lessons which others have learned, often through bitter trial and trouble. Fortunate is he who is able to serve under some older and experienced rabbi during the first years of his ministry.

It is only in the spirit of offering helpful suggestions that I venture to emphasize the fact that the leadership which the diploma insures is mere paper and that which the public awards is mere convention. In actual experience the rabbi's leadership is determined in the first place by his attitude towards his own profession, then by his attitude towards his people, and finally by the attitude of his people towards him.

In the first place, then, it is imperative that every man who assumes the title and functions of a rabbi have a clearly defined ideal, a definite standard to which he would attain as a minister among the people by whom he is called. The noble sage, Antigonus of Socho, transmitting to all future generations the impress of the pure and radiant soul of his master, the last of the high



priests, Simon the Just; gave us the supreme standard for the ministry in his admonition: אל תהיו כעבדים המשמשים את-הרב על-מנת לקבל פרס אלא היו כעבדים המשמשים את-הרב שלא על-מנת לקבל פרס ויהי מורא : שמים עליכם: "Be not like servants who serve the master for the sake of reward, but be like servants who serve the master not for the sake of reward, and let the fear of Heaven be upon you!"—*Aboth* 1:3.

The test lies herein: does a man take up the ministry to offer service or to demand service; to help others or to exploit them; to glorify himself or to glorify God?

No man deliberately accepts the lower motive, and there is none who would not resent with scorn such a charge. But there is one unfailing witness to the standard a minister has really set up for his calling, consciously or unconsciously. This witness is his daily attitude towards his people. The attitude of the minister towards his people is revealed by the way the people react, as shown by their attitude towards their minister.

Even a minister who holds his office as a real consecration to service, whose standards are the highest, whose relations with the people are frank, fair and friendly, is not yet a leader. To be a leader he must secure and hold a real constituency of followers. Your heart aflame with enthusiasm and soul kindled by high idealism, you will be chilled by the indifference of multitudes to whom religion is held as of minor or of negligible importance. You will need a robust spirit to confront your tasks. The difficulties of this task are not to be ignored.

It may be helpful to make clear the types of people with whom you will have to deal. There is first the

mass who hold themselves aloof from all affiliation with the synagogue. They are like your philosophical anarchist, who, though not in active revolt, is yet opposed to any organized form of government. They are extreme individualists. As far as my experience goes, their attitude is rarely the result of a reasoned conviction but, for the most part, is a subterfuge to hide some financial, social or other motive for standing apart.

There is a large class who may be called paradoxically the "religious materialists." Such a one will admit readily that religion is a good thing, with the mental reservation, "for others," i. e., for rabbis, children, women, and old folks. He sees the utility of the school and other adjuncts of the synagogue. He pays his dues punctiliously, will even consent to hold office, and will take pride in running the business side of the congregation to insure the rabbi's salary and meet the other obligations. But he has no conception of the real purpose of the congregation as the agency that gives character and dignity to the community, that upholds its moral tone, and yields to the individual the inspirations of the spiritual life. Therefore he has no sense of personal duty in the matter of synagogue attendance and of public, much less private, worship.

There is a third class who might be denominated "culturists." They hold a nominal allegiance to the congregation, but their real worship is given to some form of culture—aesthetic, artistic, dramatic, literary, and "ethical" culture. In fact, the one vital bond that binds them to Judaism is Jewish charity. You hear from the lips of these the familiar platitude, "My reli-

gion is to do good." This kind of religion has been well defined as that of "fruits without roots." It is true, as Matthew Arnold declares in his essays on "Culture and Religion," that conduct is three-fourths of religion. But the other one-fourth consists of the roots which nourish conduct. Hew the tree from its roots and it must perish. The roots of conduct are found in motives, in hopes, fears, ambitions, and ideals. The various cultures may contribute to the refinement of conduct, but religion alone infuses into action right principles, heroic convictions, undying loyalties, the martyr's spirit of self-sacrifice, those inspirations and sanctions that are divine.

To meet this class successfully demands not alone the best intellectual equipment but above all else the force of character which compels respect and which, in itself, best illustrates the power of Judaism as dominant in conduct.

Finally there is, happily, a fourth type: the really spiritually-minded Jew, the religious layman and laywoman. These are the real supporters of the congregation, a nucleus of people in each community with a genuine sentiment of devotion to the synagogue and all for which it stands. This fourth class constitutes the element which responds eagerly and speedily to your leadership. Let your service be primarily for them and to the degree in which you win their ardent following you win also the forces through which you may unitedly be able to bring the other classes back to their normal places in the House of Israel.

After the first gush of enthusiasm which welcomes a young minister has worn away and the novelty of seeing

a new personality and hearing a new voice in the pulpit has dimmed, you will begin to discover the persons upon whose support you can really depend in your ministry. Among these you will find a very dangerous set. I mean your warmest admirers. Woe to the man who succumbs to the flattery of his satellites and consents to be enthroned by them on the tripod of the oracle. More ministers have been ruined by conceit than by any other fault. A saving sense of humor and a daily self-confession of one's limitations are wholesome disciplines against the rhapsodies of young ladies, the adoration of little children, and the adulation and caresses of dear old dames. I recall a dear old soul whose glowing admiration was wont to voice itself, after each discourse she heard, in the genuine Malapropian outburst: "Doctor, you done grand. Short but brief!"

A more serious difficulty for the minister, be he young or old, is that which confronts him in the form of criticism. Criticism is the high right and privilege we all presume to exercise against one another. It is the privilege the pews unsparingly employ against the pulpit. Hypercriticism the minister can afford to ignore, but woe to the man in the pulpit who resents honest criticism. He robs himself of the most potent agency by which he may develop and grow, intellectually, morally, and spiritually.

It is not pleasant to have one's every utterance and every action weighed, measured, and judged, but there is no more wholesome experience. For nearly a dozen years I was kept alert by the presence and criticisms of my eminent predecessor in office. I owe to him the

most rigid and stimulating discipline of my ministry. Lawyers know that they may be tripped at every word. In the competitions of their daily pursuits men are constantly subject to attack. The minister alone is accustomed to be heard in silence and is startled when he faces demurrer and contradiction. This condition is one of the weaknesses of our system. It would be well if minister and people could come together at times in friendly conference on those vital matters which concern them, those debatable questions which really weigh upon the people's minds and hearts, but about which the rabbi hears only occasionally, indirectly, and often harshly. His exhortations and ministrations would then not be mere random shots or academic guesses, but would deal with the realities of life and would afford him genuine opportunity for leadership.

There is a direct method by which the rabbi may dedicate his ministry to service for his people, that is, the simple one of living with them and being of them. Let him apply to himself the dictum of Hillel: אל תפרש מן הצבור "Do not separate thyself from the congregation."—*Aboth* 2:5. The dread of losing dignity and authority, the inclination to be a recluse and live exclusively in the world of books, is fatal to the ideal of genuine service in the ministry. Let a man be a man among men, sharing in their interests and activities, in their natural pleasures and pastimes as well as their serious concerns, revealing his human side while always showing himself a gentleman, and people will not disguise their real natures before the minister. Carry your pulpit about with you, move in the "odor of sanctity," and you become repellent. If you want to be genuinely helpful



to people you must be able to break down the artificial barriers of formalism which the priestly garb and the sanctimonious air create. This is what I understand R. Ishmael to have meant by his familiar admonition in Aboth 3:16: **הוה קל לראש ונוה לתשחרת והוה מקבל את-כל-האדם בשמחה :** "Be pleasant of disposition, yielding to your superiors, affable to the young, and greet all men with cheerfulness."

Leadership demands the ability to handle all people, young and old alike. This requires tact. I do not mean diplomacy. Diplomacy has reference to secret motives, distrust, and the effort to take advantage while pretending to be frank and honest. Tact is the very opposite. In its primary significance it refers to touch and feeling. It is the ready power to discern just what is fit and proper under the circumstances. It is the gift of considerateness, looking away from self to others. Leadership calls for moral courage which is quite different from the bravado that glories in giving offense. Rabbis are, happily, human. They have their tempers and their temptations like other people. But to be capable of leading they must be able, better than others, to exercise that self-control which is the real test of moral courage. They must seek to conform to the standard set by Ben Zoma when he asked **איזהו נבון :** **הכובש את יצרו :** "Who is a hero?" and made reply, "He who exercises self-control." Sincerity is the supreme requisite exacted of every leader. Let any cloud dim the transparent integrity of your motives, and you cannot hold your following. Criticism that is hostile is sure to find its foil in your honesty. The highest standards of sincerity are daily applied by the people



to their minister. It is not what he says that counts with them so much as what he is. To quote Emerson: "I cannot hear what you say. What you are speaks too loudly." The man who fears that test or cannot endure its exactions has no right to be in the ministry.

Standing like a general at the head of his forces, the minister must be able to direct his people. Like the general, the minister must himself be on the alert, the first to hear and heed every call of duty. Like the physician, ever ready, the minister must respond night and day to the call of every spiritual need. In answer to such calls he comes to those who are under the cloud of some great anxiety; to those bewildered by some intricate perplexity of soul; to those, perhaps, under the burden of a great shame or disgrace; to those exulting in some great joy; to those crushed by sickness and bowed by sorrow; to those face to face with the supreme mystery of death. They want their minister in these great crises of life and they cry out for him. What do they want? Not merely something learned out of a book, not argument or persuasion, however earnest or vehement. No, they want the heart, its deepest and tenderest sentiments, its sympathies, to give them fortitude and to put new warmth and devotion into their souls. They want the sense of the personal presence of the man whose help they have a right to expect in their strivings to approach the source of divine strength.

The trust placed in a minister, the confidence felt in his disinterestedness, and the genuineness of his friendship—these are the foundations of that personal relationship between him and his people which alone gives

value and force to his ministrations. Though by many the personal element is treated with levity and shallowness, I beg to emphasize its importance in the functions of a rabbi as teacher, as preacher, but most of all as minister in the highest and most sacred offices of religion which call him into the homes of the people and bring him into intimate touch with the individual. There are crises that come into every life. Such are the moments when the barriers of conventionality break down, when the artificialities of social life are shattered, and when all pretense is brushed aside like a gossamer film. In moments of great spiritual awakening, and especially when people are bowed by sorrow or crushed by the burden of some woe more heavy than death, the soul is bared in its inmost depths to the minister alone. Then comes the real opportunity of the rabbi to be a minister. With understanding and sympathy, with reverence and genuine responsiveness, he can give strength, comfort, inspiration, and support to those who lean upon his counsel, his calmness, and his unfaltering faith in the divine wisdom and beneficence.

The ultimate test of the true minister is found in the possession of that subtle quality we call soulfulness—an indefinable spiritual force which is potent to touch the deeper, inner nature of men and women and to stir into active responsiveness their finest and noblest emotions and impulses.

“Be noble! and the nobleness that lies  
In other men, sleeping but never dead  
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own.”

—*James Russell Lowell. Sonnet IV.*

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q.** From the titles of your lectures am I right in assuming that you relegate the function of the rabbi as a student of some form of Jewish literature to the background?

**A.** Not at all. In the first lecture on "The Rabbi as Minister," and in the lecture on "Ethical Problems of the Rabbi," my motive is to emphasize certain phases of the career which awaits you, to which, under present changed conditions, I am convinced, adequate consideration has not been given. The rabbi of the past was free to devote himself primarily to scholarly pursuits. The urgency of present needs often forces us out of the quiet of the study, and frequently robs us of the privilege of engaging in independent researches, and compels us to live intellectually on the products of those who are privileged as professors and authors to engage in special studies.

The lectures on "The Rabbi as Teacher" and "The Rabbi as Preacher" will, I trust, reveal to you none the less that the rabbi must be above all else a student, and devote himself faithfully to the traditions of Jewish scholarship, though his special function at present be mainly the vital task of transmuting the golden ore of his studies into the knowledge that shall pass current among the people.

**Q.** What are the legal points on which a rabbi must post himself in order to solemnize marriages?

A. These are different in different states of the Union. In some states it is necessary that the minister place his diploma on file with the proper court officer, or show it to him, or offer other guarantees of his authority to act as a Jewish minister. Official proof of election by a congregation or of membership in a ministerial conference may be required.

In Pennsylvania it is necessary for the parties who are to be married to produce a license from the Clerk of the Orphans' Court. This authorizes the minister to officiate, and requires that he return the form duly signed within a given date. He is subject to fine or imprisonment as a penalty of neglect.

In New York, after a minister is registered, he is authorized to issue the license. The Board of Health in some municipalities requires in addition a return of all marriages for statistical purposes. Blank forms for the record are provided.

The laws of the States differ widely also in reference to prohibited and permitted consanguinity and affinity between contracting parties. The marriage of first cousins is forbidden in some states and permitted in others.

You are aware that ignorance of the divorce laws has also caused much moral confusion among those who failed to realize that in this country a "Get" has no civic validity whatever. The confusion and contradiction in the marriage and divorce laws of the states have led to a laxity in obedience and a lightness in evasion which have created one of the most serious dangers threatening American family life.

Besides fulfilling the requirements of the civil law, the rabbi must be controlled by the Jewish law governing the sanctioning of the marriage bond. Dr. Mielziner's valuable book on "The Jewish Law of Marriage and Divorce" is essential for your guidance. The decisions of our Rabbinical Conferences ought to be familiar to you. In doubtful situations seek the counsel of experienced colleagues before you consent to officiate.

The civic and ecclesiastical law having been complied with, the most serious and responsible duty of the rabbi still remains to be fulfilled, and that is, to determine whether the requirements of the moral law are fully satisfied by the conditions of the marriage. Here enter questions of conscience which you as an individual must decide for yourself. For example, would you marry a runaway couple? Would you marry a couple who have not the consent of their parents or guardians? Would you marry a couple in case one or both persons are not of the Jewish faith? Would you conduct a marriage service on days and at times that contravene Jewish tradition and custom? To these and kindred questions I would answer unequivocally, "No!" If you ask why, I reply, "Because, as a minister, I must be the ultimate and trusted guardian of religion and the home." Where the parties openly flout all religion and desire to use a minister merely to satisfy a convention, the minister has a right to resent their attitude and decline. The "mixed marriage" becomes a farce and the minister lends himself to a sham when he invokes the sanctions of the Jewish religion upon the union of those to whom these sanctions mean nothing.



The object of marriage as a spiritual bond is the creation of a new home which shall be a shrine dedicated to the culture of all the virtues. What a mockery, then, for you, as a minister to lend yourself to solemnizing a marriage which involves the breaking of home-ties, the shattering of parental claims, and the rending of family bonds. Bend your efforts rather to the upholding of these bonds by allaying ill-feeling, conciliating the parents and members of the two families involved, and using means by which to make the future mutually helpful to all concerned. Try to serve thus before, not after the marriage. Begin with an earnest, sympathetic talk with the couple. Drive home the vital consequences of their act. Make them understand your standpoint and you will rarely fail to win their co-operation.

**Q.** In ritual questions what sources of authority do you use in reaching a decision?

**A.** An intrinsic authority rests in the force of traditions that have flowed on in a continuous channel through the centuries. To that authority each generation in Israel has rendered homage. Yet each generation that has faced new conditions of life has been obliged to modify, alter, or re-create the forms in which it could express its own religious life best. What Dr. Schechter called "Catholic Israel," i. e., the consensus of the sentiment, intelligence, and conscience of the people of Israel, was the ultimate authority for such changes as were recognized and heeded.

At periods when we had legislative and judicial organizations like the Men of the Great Synagogue, the Sanhedrin, and the Courts, to them authority was

accorded for everything, from the fixing of the calendar to the order of prayers. When these authorities passed into oblivion, it was to the academies and their learned rabbis that the people submitted mooted questions for decision. The literature of "Responses" shows how, throughout generations, the questions called forth by changed conditions were submitted to individuals of acknowledged character, learning, and judgment, and these decisions acquired authoritative force.

The transitions of our own time from the restrictions of medieval Europe to this era of emancipation have been so swift and overwhelming that it has been difficult to hold intact the force of older traditions. Yet, the whole history of the adaptation of Jewish religious practice to modern needs is the history of the effort to be true to the force of the old traditions while being fair to the honor and integrity of a people reborn, as it were, in freedom.

In other words, that summary of our code, known as the *Shulchan Aruch*, still holds our reverential regard as the recognized authority. In all cases where reason, common sense, and, above all, sincerity demand it, we, too, venture to modify, alter, or entirely recreate its prescribed ordinances. In our turn we rest our cause on the judgment, the intelligence, and the conscience of the ablest, the wisest, and most trusted of our leaders. The people look to their rabbis for authority. The consensus of the rabbis, as set forth in the resolutions of our Conferences—though these cannot be enforced—constitute the source of authority in such matters. New issues, or those which the Conferences



have not considered, are by good Jewish precedent referred to the judgment of our ablest and most experienced rabbis.

**Q.** Do people really think of seeing the rabbi in important crises in their lives? How can the rabbi indicate his willingness to be of service to people who are not used to doing this.

**A.** You are familiar with those words in the opening paragraph of that section of our Prayer Book called the *Amidah*, or Eighteen Benedictions, in which God himself is characterized as **סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים** ומתיר אסירים the One "Who lifteth up the fallen, healeth the sick, and redeemeth those who are imprisoned." Some rabbinical wag has declared that God has now relegated these duties to the modern minister. A large share of his time is demanded by the importunities of those who are stranded, the schnorrers and misfits as well as the victims of genuine misfortune. "He lifteth up the fallen" is to be taken literally, since he is a friend to the friendless, a helper and medium of counsel, and an aid to all sorts and conditions of men, women, and children in all sorts of difficulties. The agencies for relief of all kinds may, should, and do act in these matters, but the minister must see that the real sentiment of Zedakah shall not fail.

"He visiteth the sick." Yes, the people really think of seeing their minister when sickness enters the home. In fact, they are sometimes thoughtless and inconsiderate enough to charge him with neglect when he may be in utter ignorance of the fact of the illness, or when his call has been deferred by the public duties he

cannot postpone. Not resentment but patient indulgence must rule us at such times, and the pettiness of people soon vanishes before the sympathy, the cheeriness, the helpfulness your visit may bring to those who are depressed. The call to the dying must be heeded ever.

"To redeem those who are imprisoned" is a distinctively new and modern function of the rabbi. Previous generations rarely knew of Jewish law-breakers, but alas, in recent times these violators of law and defamers of religion have increased. They appeal to the rabbi desperately, shamelessly and often impertinently, to get them out of jail. Their claim is inevitably that they are falsely victimized, and the rabbi must see that no injustice is done.

It is not necessary for the rabbi to indicate to the people that he is willing to be of service in real emergencies and difficulties. Your conduct will soon enough advertise your qualities. If your conception of the ministry is that of a life of service, of ministering to the needs and welfare of others, opportunities will not fail.

A young woman in a certain western city was reciting to me the qualifications of the various rabbis who had occupied the pulpit in succession. "Dr. X. was a wonderful organizer and *made* us all do things. Dr. Y. was a brilliant man and made us think and stirred our minds. Dr. Z. was a great orator and fascinated us by his eloquence. But we have had only one real minister and that was Dr. A. He was a man to whom I could give my full confidence and be assured always of understanding and real help."

**Q.** Should a minister accept pay for a pastoral call? Are there rabbis who do?

**A.** The question is somewhat vague. What are pastoral calls? Do you refer to them in the sense that prevails in other churches, viz., that the minister comes to a household to exhort and hold services? We do not, in that sense, have pastoral calls made by the minister. Calls of a purely social character are certainly not referred to by this inquiry. The calls made have reference to the fulfillment of those religious and friendly offices for which people seek the aid of the rabbi. Thus, when a death occurs, the rabbi is informed and it is his duty, in my judgment, at the earliest opportunity to see the family, to counsel with them and help them by his friendly sympathy and guidance. He should let them feel that he is standing by their side to help them maintain their poise in the midst of calamity, and in every possible way in his power to give them fortitude. After the funeral and the "Minyan" for Memorial services, it is the custom, and I think an excellent one, for the minister to call upon the family. At such a time many readjustments in family life and in the life of individuals are bound to occur, and often they desire to refer such matters to the disinterested judgment of a friend like their minister. This is the sort of pastoral call I advise.

When some joyous event like a betrothal occurs it is customary, and I believe it is an admirable custom, to let the minister know about it. He is, or should be, interested in the history of every family to which he

ministers, and this interest added to common courtesy would prompt him to visit the family and share in its rejoicing. There are other occasions that will readily suggest themselves to your mind, especially during these trying times of war when you will be doing a kindly act and probably a helpful one if you keep in communication with your people and have them look to you as a friend.

As far as accepting pay for such calls goes, I think the question indicates a misunderstanding. I have been trying to emphasize modes of establishing friendly relations in a community between the rabbi and the families and individuals to whom he ministers. You would not take pay for acts of friendship.

Probably the question hints at the fee system. There is a custom of long standing for people to send the minister an expression of good will and appreciation in the shape of a fee when he officiates at a funeral, marriage, Bar Mitzvah, confirmation, dedication of a tombstone, and the like. My judgment is that this custom has been very deleterious to the high standing of our calling. It has made some of our men keep their eye constantly on the purse and tended to lower the standard of the minister by putting him on the plane of a waiter or other hireling covetous of gratuities. I do not wish to convey to you the impression that I do not value money. I need it. We all need it. I am not getting up on stilts and talking down, but I believe the time has come when, as a body of men, we have the right to take a stand for the honor of our calling. The

rabbi of another day, perhaps, did not have enough to eat. There are still congregations that keep the rabbi on a starvation income. We have a right to demand of the congregation a living salary, and not be made to depend on any gratuities. If you demonstrate this attitude of right and honor and respect for your profession you will not suffer thereby financially or materially. On the contrary, your own courageous self-respect will react on the whole attitude of the people. If you are mercenary you make them so. The reverse is no less true. It takes time and patience to train the public to that point of view, but such is the minister's task.

Nevertheless it remains true that people feel that they want to express to the minister in some tangible way their gratitude and appreciation on certain occasions. This is a sentiment one dare not wantonly offend. As a young minister resenting the fee system I had people take great offense because at the time I did not know how to go about returning their gifts. I learned in the course of time from my blunders. Formerly I used to write in acknowledgement, "With your consent I shall take the liberty of bestowing your gift on such and such a charity." But one day a man wrote me somewhat resentfully, "Send my check back. I will take care of my own charity." Now I simply write that I shall use the money for such and such, either naming the institution or not. The fee system being so strongly entrenched, it cannot be readily abrogated. Let the fees be used for unselfish purposes, and you thus



convey to the congregation the idea that the minister desires to stand on a higher plane in his relation to the people. Use the money for charitable, educational and religious work. Do not accept it as a mere fee. The acceptance of fees and gifts from confirmation classes has become such a heavy tax that the poor exclude their children to evade humiliation. Mere preaching will be useless to counteract the lavish bestowal of gifts on the children as long as the rabbi himself sets so poor an example.

**Q.** Should a rabbi expect members to call upon him for a visit before he calls upon them?

**A.** Courtesy and common sense should rule in establishing the relations between the rabbi and his people. That the members of the congregation should desire to meet the rabbi and provide an opportunity to do so is no more nor less than the courtesy due to him as a stranger and new-comer in their midst. The prevailing custom is for the congregation to create an opportunity for him to meet the people socially. This generally takes the form of a public reception, either in the synagogue or some other public place. The officers and their wives serve as the hosts by whom the members of the congregation and their families are introduced in turn and become personally acquainted with the new minister. You may rely upon the natural curiosity of the people and upon simple courtesy to prompt them to attend the reception. Most of them will come to take a look at you and to take your measure as a man, outside of the pulpit. Your presumption is that

every one has come to welcome you. Some may send excuses, such as absence from the city or some unavoidable accident that prevented them from coming at the appointed time and place to meet you. In general, however, it is wise to take it for granted that everyone has solicited your personal acquaintance on the public occasion. If, however, the occasion has not been provided, it might be well for you to suggest to the officers that you be given an opportunity to meet, face to face, the men and women among whom you will work.

A rabbi cannot dedicate himself primarily to making visits. Important as this is, it is not of the main importance. His public duties soon become imperative.

Q. Why is the rabbi frequently charged with "catering to the rich?"

A. Because he will naturally associate mostly with those who, having the time and the means, carry the communal responsibilities. It is therefore important that the rabbi guard against justifying this charge. He must deliberately aim to establish a personal, friendly relation with all his people and resist temptation to limit his association to the few whom he may elect.

Q. To what should a rabbi of a congregation in both small and large communities limit himself in the way of social functions? Is it improper for a rabbi to dance, exercise in a gymnasium, share in the public bathing at the sea-shore, and the like?

A. A rabbi is to live a normal life among the people. He does not differ in social instincts and desires from other normal people. He needs recreation. The rabbi



lives under the constant stress which comes with his share in the excitements of the community and in the troubles of individuals, and he needs must relax or sin against nature and suffer the inevitable breakdown. President Wilson, I understand, in these trying war times goes to the theatre three times a week and is out on the golf course frequently. We must keep fit if we would meet our responsibilities capably. Fortunately you boys in college now are being brought up under quite a different system from that which prevailed in former years. In my day we had no time assured us for athletics, no physician to look after us and direct us as to our physical well-being. You are being advised how best to conserve health, to meet successfully the great strain on your nervous and physical system which is entailed by the life of a minister. I advocate the gymnasium and the sea-bath. I loathe that sham delicacy which associates indecency with the human frame as God has created it.

I believe in mingling with the people socially. I see no reason why a rabbi should not occasionally share in dancing if he knows how to dance. I do not believe in making a pursuit of this or any other pastime, least of all playing cards. There are some rabbis to my knowledge who have cultivated the habit. I am not opposed to playing cards as long as it is recreation. But I do not believe you can afford to cheat yourselves and undermine the influence you want to exercise over the people by any familiarity of that kind. Social clubs exist in Jewish communities. I am an honorary member of

two, and on occasions share in the social festivities. You can afford better to deny yourself some things than give offense to others. The discipline will prove wholesome both for you and your people. A young rabbi once asked me if I would sanction dancing on a Sunday night in his school building opposite a church. I advised his people to abstain from it as inconsiderate of the sensibilities of the Christian neighbors. Use your common sense and hold yourself always ready to make some sacrifice. In all such cases ask yourself what a considerate gentleman would do. A rabbi needs no higher standards and will follow no lower ones.

## II

### THE RABBI AS TEACHER

OUR last discourse found its climax in emphasizing the value of a strong personal bond between the rabbi and his people. The opportunity to establish such a bond offers itself forthwith when you enter upon your duties as a teacher. It is well to remember that the primary significance of the title "rabbi" is "teacher." The title is enhanced in dignity and significance in that the people themselves have for centuries given to it the personal touch, by making the pronominal ending an inseparable part of the title itself. Each individual feels himself to be in the direct personal relationship of pupil or disciple when he addresses his "Rav" as "Rabbi," "my teacher," "my master." The highest homage has been paid in Israel not to princes and warriors, but to scholars and teachers. Moses lives in the affections of the generations not as the liberator, lawgiver, or prophet, but as "Moshe Rabbenu," "Moses our teacher." Ezra, the first of the Scribes, receives this glowing encomium in sacred writ: "Now Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances." (*Ezra* 7:10). His motive became the aim and ideal of all the succeeding generations of our sages. We are to prove ourselves worthy of so noble a heritage. It cannot be

done by assuming an ecclesiastical aloofness and condescension, much less by a cheap familiarity of manner.

As teachers, we must set our hearts to the task of learning how to create the friendliest relationships with those we teach while yet constraining in them the homage, respect, and devotion that endure. Other teachers may equip their pupils with intellectual attainments, with vocational training, or cultural refinements. For the teacher of religion is reserved the distinction and the sublime responsibility of moulding character, forming convictions, establishing principles, and inspiring conduct in his charges. His is the joyous privilege to cultivate those virtues and excellencies of which it is said in Mishnah Peah 1.: שאדם אוכל פירותיהם בעולם הזה והקמן קיימת לו לעולם הבא: "The fruitage is enjoyed here, the stalk remains hereafter."

It is with a spirit of consecration, then, that the rabbi approaches his task as a teacher, beginning with the little children. Among them he realizes the profound purport of the words of Rabbi Jehuda Hanassi: אין העולם מתקיים אלא בשביד הבל תינוקות של רבן: "The world is sustained by the breath of the school-children." (*Sabb.* 119b). What you make of the boys and girls entrusted to your care will determine the quality of the men and women of the future. The standards you establish in your school will fix the standards maintained in your pews. The earliest and most unremitting concern of a rabbi therefore, must be the religious school. The

problems of organization, management, and discipline should have his earnest consideration long before he assumes charge. All the questions of providing adequate teachers or raising the standards of teaching and concern for the right materials of instruction, belong today to the authority which is implied in his "Hattarat Hora'ah," "authority to teach and decide."

I cannot urge upon you too strongly the necessity of taking advantage of every opportunity afforded to you by the pedagogical courses at the University and in the Teachers' Institute of the College and the practical teaching experiences of the religious schools of the Jewish community. This preparation is of primary importance to you in your future responsibility as superintendents of Religious Schools. But with the best of the preliminary training available, you will still find that you will need the aid of professional teachers in conducting your schools. In the graded schools of our congregations the standards are being raised everywhere by giving preference to normal school graduates and trained teachers for our classes. Our schools are learning to value such services and to pay for them. The present condition, however, is serious because your teacher may be trained and efficient in every requirement, but lacking in the essential, i. e. the highly specialized knowledge demanded for the teaching of Judaism and the true spirit of religious zeal and devotion through which this knowledge is to be imparted. To meet these fatal defects such endeavors have come into existence as the Correspondence School of the Jewish Chautauqua Society, its Annual Assemblies, and the



extension lectures and summer courses of the Teachers' Institute, and the State Conferences of Religious School Teachers. The limitations of time and geographical position, the financial hindrances, and other obstacles in the way of these undertakings enable them to do but a fragment of the work needed. To whatever degree these hindrances may be overcome, it will still devolve upon each rabbi to be in his community the teacher of his teachers. By this I do not mean that he is to set himself up as superior in the theory and practice of pedagogy, but of religion. I find it well to have a public school principal carry on the practical management of my school, and to have normal school graduates in charge of the classes. I am glad to be relieved of the mechanical side of the school system. The rabbi as superintendent has, I feel, a responsibility and force to exercise of far more value. His must be the subtle but none the less real influence that pervades the school and insures in it a reverent atmosphere and a genuinely Jewish spirit. He must supervise the instruction and infuse into the class-room work of each teacher the distinctive religious motive and aim. For herein alone lies the significance and justification of the Religious School as such.

There is a strong line of differentiation between secular and Religious Schools. This is emphasized by the American principle of the absolute separation of Church and State. In secular schools all instruction in matters of religious belief and all forms of religious practices must be rigidly excluded in deference to the great principles of religious freedom and the rights of



conscience. While all schools must be moral and train in moral conduct, it is the distinct province of the Religious School to teach those sanctions of morality and grounds of obligation which are above mere utility. It is the function of the Religious School to apply what the secular school may not and must not touch upon, and that is, the authority which makes morality mandatory. This authority is differently defined by different religions. The definitions are variously interpreted within the schools of one and the same religion. But whether it be a system of transcendental philosophy, the "categoric imperative" of duty, or a divine revelation, however literally or broadly accepted, some definite, binding authority as the source of obligation must be carried home to the mind and heart of the pupil. The solemn sanctities that seize upon the soul and constrain its impulses toward right action must be effectively utilized, if we would create pure, reverent, self-sacrificing character.

Judaism has its own methods of attaining this end. It has its own simple and effective doctrines, its own sanctified expressions of the religious sentiments, convictions, and ideals through which it touches the souls of its devotees. The Jewish School is distinct from the schools of other religions in using these Jewish methods of awakening and deepening the religious life. The curriculum therefore calls for imparting by means of the Jewish appeal, the sanctions of morality and the modes for cultivating the religious sentiment. It should aim to strengthen the consciousness through the hallowed observances which are the creation of the

Jewish spirit. Each school must apply them in conformity with its own standpoint.

This is a program which cannot be fully carried out in the limited time of the religious school which meets only for a couple of hours on Sunday. Because of this fact you will find, as I have found in practical experience, that the curriculum of the school must be extended greatly. After persistent efforts throughout the years, the studies of the religious school have been expanded to parallel those of the grammar grades of the public schools. This is now supplemented by a four year High School course of which the Confirmation Class constitutes the first or Freshman year. Following the High School course, opportunity for adults is provided in religious study clubs or circles in which a group of men and women follow advanced studies on Jewish subjects selected at their own option from year to year and affording opportunity for discussing live issues of Jewish life, Judaism, its principle, and its practices. In all the school grades, from the lowest to the highest, modes are provided for translating into conduct the lessons of religion which are taught. For the higher grades a Junior Congregation, modeled on the lines of the Congregation proper, enlists its members in the conducting of adjunct religious services on the High Holidays and Sabbath Eve for those otherwise unprovided for. It also engages in important public social service activities and, in general, aims to promote friendly relations among the members and to supplement all congregational undertakings.

The rabbi as leader and guide in such educational endeavors may find ample scope to teach old and young and to provide opportunity for instruction for all, from the age of seven to seventy. The important question is, "How shall the rabbi utilize all this splendid opportunity to serve as a teacher and as a teacher of those who teach under his direction?"

The reply that is made to this inquiry is, "Let him teach the Bible, the world's greatest text-book of morals and religion." This is indeed the method of the Jewish Schools whose motto is, "Talmud Torah keneged kullom," "Of all obligations the study of the Torah is the chief one." No other people has elevated study to so high a plane as has the Jewish people. The universal system of Bible reading in our synagogues is an offering of the intellect in the service of the Divine. "Ain am haaretz chasid," "No ignoramus can be truly pious," is the proverbial maxim of the people.

The teaching of the Bible is unquestionably of the first importance. The distinction must, however, be clearly kept in mind between teaching and preaching. The criticism is sometimes made that rabbis are not apt to be good teachers because they are prone to preach rather than teach. We shall have occasion in our next discourse to treat of the method and aim of preaching. A Bible lesson, to be taught effectively, must be so presented that the religious and moral contents are conveyed indirectly and by implication, and not as something added,—an anticlimax.

However, the voice of experience warns us, and the modern psychological school of pedagogy insists, that

as a mere intellectual exercise Bible study is in itself inadequate. After your pupils have learned all about the Bible, its language, history and literature, its texts of wisdom, the lyrics of its psalmists, and the eloquence of its prophets; nay, though they master the whole continuous output of our great historical literature inspired by the Bible, it does not follow that they will have in their hearts the sure restraints of morality, the glad compulsions of duty, and the reverent qualities of soulfulness. Something more than knowledge is necessary. This something more is the subtle essence of the personality of the teacher, through which the knowledge is conveyed. Through the teaching of the Bible your personality must shine with such a glowing radiance as to illumine the very soul of the child. You must show by what you are and what you do that the precepts you teach are your own. Show that you thoroughly hate what is false and love what is true and you will vitalize the Bible teaching even on its intellectual side, you will make your pupils abhor the false and lead them so to love the truth that through you they receive the intense conviction and sublime revelation that God is Truth. חותמו של הק"ב אמת. As the rabbis put it, "The seal of God is truth."—(*Sabb. 64*).

You wish to teach definite moral precepts. You are to quicken the conscience of your pupils and make them ever responsive to the call of duty. You may have children glibly recite the Ten Commandments and the sterling precepts of the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus, but to make these vital and of immediate and permanent effect your personality is needed. If you want

your pupils to be prompt and regular in attendance, obedient to every requirement of the school, then you yourself must be conscientious in every detail. The old Jewish injunction, "Lo Hammidrash ikkor elo Hammaaseh," "Not knowing, but doing, is the principal thing," must find clear and faithful demonstration in your own conduct. Thereby the child must be made to feel a loathing and shame for every moral lapse, and in the same degree must be inspired with such an earnest love for what is right that it comes to realize that God is Righteousness.

Another important precept of Jewish pedagogy which has direct reference to the personality of the teacher is this: "Lo Ha-kapdon Melamed," "No hot-tempered person can teach." He who is set to rule the will of others must rule his own will first. In the self-discipline of the teacher the pupil finds the most telling exemplification of that noble fruitage of education,—self-control. Shouting, screaming, exhibitions of petulance, temper, and rage are absolutely ruinous to teaching. The equability and serenity of the teacher, especially under provocation, is the primary quality through which the pupil imbibes the calmness of a dignified, self-contained attitude of judgment. This quality is essential in defeating misunderstanding, prejudice, and a thousand other cruelties. Let the light of fairness stream out upon your doings, so that you may bring to your pupils some glimmerings of the revelation that God is Justice.

If thus you appeal to the intellect, conscience, and will, no less must you put your heart into your teaching. The unemotional teacher, devoid of enthusiasm,



working like a passionless machine, will deaden the nobler impulses of even the best of pupils. The finer graces of character cannot be taught from books, and religion cannot be learned by rote. These inhere in the mystic contagion of personality which passes from the loving mother to the fond child, from the anxious father to the trusting son and in a potent measure also from the patient and loving teacher to the admiring pupils. A close sympathetic relation must be established between teacher and class. The heart must be in the work that, out of the glowing exultation of warm-hearted and mutual devotion, may stream forth the revelation that God is Love.

You are working upon the mind, the conscience, the will, and the heart of your pupils. What is the result you are to seek with clear and unwavering purpose? It is a certain indefinable but none the less real quality which is the essence of purity, truthfulness, righteousness, justice, and love, that quality which makes for force of character and which we call soulfulness.

Cultivate in your pupils the sense of wonder. Do not let them miss the daily uplift of the beauty and glory of the divine message of God's handiwork. Reveal to them the majesty and dignity of the great endowments of the soul by which the human is lifted from the brutal to the divine. Quicken the sense of awe and gratitude for the loving providence which is everywhere manifest, so that without fear or compulsion the child may come to realize with gladness that God is worshipful.

I believe that the habit of both public and private worship is of supreme value in cultivating a truly



religious character, but only when infused with genuine soulfulness and spirit. I believe that the precepts and doctrines of religion must be taught and explained, but these are matters of theology which is a highly important part of religion but not all of it. Theology is the thought of man about God, duty and destiny. Religion is the resultant attitude of the soul toward the universe and the Creator, potent in determining conduct and moulding character. This attitude the teacher must cultivate within himself would he impart it to others. It is all in all a personal relation. Such has it been among us from of yore. It is this personal touch with his pupils which the teacher must cultivate if his teaching is to be really effective in developing the personal "spiritual touch" between the individual soul and God. Let us emphasize this significant tradition of the Jewish schools. To Comenius' maxim, "We learn by doing," and to Froebel's creative principle, "We grow by doing," let us apply the equally vital truth "We teach by being."

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q.** Do you consider the development of a Jewish consciousness essential in the religious training of the Jewish child?

**A.** It should hardly be necessary to ask that question after the emphasis laid upon it in my paper. I think the Jewish school has no right to exist unless it will do just that. Otherwise you might as well send your child to the Unitarian, Methodist, Ethical or any other non-Jewish school.

**Q.** What do you mean by the "Jewish spirit?" You said, "Let there be a distinctly Jewish atmosphere in the school," and yet you declare the chief object of the school to be the training of religious and moral character. This object is practically non-sectarian.

**A.** Spirit is so subtle that it eludes definition. Yet it is so real that you are immediately aware and able to speak with definiteness of the spirit which pervades an occasion, which marks an event, or characterizes an address. "Atmosphere" is so pervasive it cannot be confined, yet both literally and figuratively it is the very element of life which we breathe and "in which we live and move and have our being." You are conscious, e. g., of the fact that the atmosphere which pervades a public gathering, such as an assembly for worship, is reverential, impressive, edifying, and inspiring, or lacking in these lofty qualities. It is true that the fundamentals of morality and religion are shared by many groups, yet

each group, in the exercise and expression of its religious life, develops a distinct spirit of its own. The Jewish spirit and the Jewish atmosphere are very exalted and are real elements, of whose presence or absence you become speedily conscious in the home, in the synagogue, or in the class-room instruction. How do you recognize it? As we learn by contrast, it may be best to indicate that there is a marked difference, e. g., between the Jewish, the Christian, and the pagan spirit. The pagan spirit is entranced with and exalts the outer appearance of things; it worships beauty, glorifies strength, deifies the material universe.

The Jew interprets the material in spiritual terms, looks beneath outward form and phenomena to causes and glorifies the Creator, not the creature. Herein Christianity is at one with Judaism. But the daughter religion has separated from the mother religion in that the "Christian spirit" is essentially pietistic, contemplative, and marked by "other worldliness," the product of a deepened mysticism.

The Jewish spirit is revealed in that attitude towards the unknown which declares: הנסתרות לה' אלהינו והגלולות לנו ולבנינו עד-עולם לעשות את-כל-דברי התורה הזאת : "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." (*Deut.* 29:29). The Jewish spirit is primarily distinguished by a certain clear and direct mental attitude. It assumes the rationalizing attitude towards all subjects within the scope of reason. It is possessed of a certain practical quality called *Tachlith*, תכלית

meaning "end, object, purpose," or what we would call the "common-sense and utility of a thing." It is content to leave to God the secrets of the unknown, the unknowable, and the hereafter. Instead of brooding over them it accepts life and what it reveals in order "to do the words of this law." Therefore Judaism has produced a distinctively Jewish system of ethics. The emphasis of the Law and the prophets is on conduct. Their eternal cry is for righteousness and justice and truth in human relations, whereas in Christian Ethics the yearning is primarily for love, mercy and forgiveness. (Consult Moritz Lazarus's great work on "Jewish Ethics.")

The Jewish spirit also manifests itself in specific Jewish doctrines concerning God and man, duty and destiny. We have a clearly defined "Jewish Theology" developed through centuries, but which has for the first time been co-ordinated and organized on the basis of modern scientific treatment in the masterly work of Dr. K. Kohler, in his "Jewish Theology," the recent publication of which has been hailed with delight.

Moreover, the Jewish spirit has stirred the creative genius of its people, in the course of the centuries, to find consistent modes of expression in ceremonials, rites, festivals and hallowed observances touching all life's experiences from birth to the grave. These observances are rich in charm and potent as a cult to impress the souls of men, women, and children alike. Jewish people respond with understanding and sympathy to appeals of this kind which stir up the dormant sentiment and kindle the ardor of their devotion. Thus if you hold

aloft a copy of the Hebrew Scrolls of the Law before a general audience, it may interest them as the survival of something antique in the age of printing. But a "Sepher Torah" uplifted in the midst of a devout Jewish Congregation is the call to rally about the standard under which our sires marched throughout the ages. This act sets the heart throbbing with a renewed fervor of loyalty to those divine principles enshrined in the Scroll, in whose behalf we stand ready to make sacrifices no less real than those which glorified our sires.

Now the Jewish school, no less than the home and the synagogue, is the repository of noble Jewish traditions through which the Jewish spirit has been conserved and developed from generation to generation. The fascinating story of Israel's preservation is largely a story of our schools and teachers. You know the thrilling episode of how Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai was borne at night out of the beleaguered city of Jerusalem in a coffin on the shoulders of his disciples, and gaining access to the tent of the Roman general Titus, besought the simple privilege of opening a school in the seacoast town of Jabne (Jaffe). The Temple fell, the national government disappeared, but Israel has since lived in the schools.

The history of Jewish education has developed some exceedingly interesting and valuable chapters of which even our modern pedagogues have scant knowledge, to our shame be it confessed. Thus, we have some original modes of teaching which should be utilized and cherished in our schools today and by means of which we may impart a distinctively Jewish flavor and atmos-



phere to our instruction. I refer to the Mashal, the Midrash, and the Posek, i. e. the use of proverbs, parables, allegories and texts that flood our literature. The modern system of "International Sunday School Lessons" is but a feeble imitation of our ancient and universal system of the weekly reading and study of the sections of the Torah,—the "Parashah"—as well as of the prophets and other scriptures,—the "Haftarah." Object lessons of exquisite beauty and significance are embodied in our festival observances. These enshrine for child and for adult, in tangible form, the outward tokens of the inward Jewish spirit, and stimulate its expression through our exalted prayers and stirring hymnology.

While it is true that the fundamentals of all moral and religious training are non-sectarian, this fact must not dull our apprehension of the truth that, to make these fundamentals vital in the life of the individual, each historic group needs those modes of appeal and soul-gripping force which are the outcome of its own needs and strivings, its own memories and achievements. Thus it becomes the function of the Jewish teacher to conserve the Jewish spirit and to utilize its modes of expression in the education of the Jewish child. To neglect these modes and to turn our schools into mere "ethical schools," barren of the influences and sanctions of the Jewish religion, is to cast away as tinsel those precious gems for which generations have lived, endured, and suffered martyrdom.

Q. Would you teach Orthodox children Reform Judaism?



A. Yes, and also the reverse. I would have Reform and Orthodox understand and respect each other's convictions. Children come to the school from homes of the Orthodox who misunderstand Reform, and there are children who come from the homes of Reform parents who scoff at Orthodoxy. When children come to my school from Orthodox homes I have a right to presume that they are sent to me for that interpretation of Judaism which it is known I teach. It appears to me that the time has come in the history of our development when we can afford to be just and generous with one another. In fact, we cannot afford any longer to bring up Jewish children ignorant of the good things in Judaism, whatever be the varying forms of expression and interpretation they may have found. I want the boys and girls to know about Orthodox Judaism and, as I teach from a Reform standpoint, I want them to understand that standpoint and know when and why we consider ourselves justified in departing from the Orthodox views. I want them to appreciate our reconstructive efforts to reform our religious life and to keep it consistent, vital, and true for us. Pupils in my school see the "Tallit," the "Mezuzah," and other symbols whether we use them or not, and are given some explanation of their origin and significance and the sentiment attached to them, and of the reason why, by many, they are still held in reverence. We lose nothing, in my judgment, by making this apparent, and we gain tremendously when they learn to justify the Reform standpoint as an evolution from what to us are obsolete modes of expressing our religious convictions and sentiments.

**Q.** When the teaching staff is made up of benevolent women of the congregation who unfortunately know little of methods of teaching or the materials of instruction, how shall the young rabbi proceed in eliminating them?

**A.** Unless he have ready to fill their places others who do know both method and material of instruction, it were wise for the rabbi not to proceed to eliminate. Let him rather educate them. With the basis of a benevolent interest in the school and a reasonable preliminary education these women offer splendid material to work with.

It was after a trip across the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast, visiting many of the cities and towns en route and investigating the conditions of our religious schools, that Dr. William Rosenau and I came to a realization of the fact that the most pressing need of our schools at present is some practical mode of giving help to this very class of earnest-minded young amateur teachers. As a result, we planned out and brought into existence the "Correspondence School for Religious School Teachers," conducted by the Jewish Chautauqua Society from its home office in Philadelphia. You will find in that school a direct and practical answer to your query.

**Q.** Would you insist upon the system of paid teachers as a principle?

**A.** My answer to this question is revealed in the fact that I have none but paid teachers in my school. I do not mean to cast aspersions on the value of the work of any really capable, earnest-minded, and truly conse-

crated individual, ready to sacrifice his time and energy in the work of teaching, but I believe the time has come when our congregations must be taught that the religious school is too serious and important to be trifled with or treated as subsidiary. Thousands of dollars are spent on music, on architecture, on decoration. Yet these are mere externalities and, in my judgment, of minor import as compared with the fundamental value of the educational work to be done under the auspices of the congregation. In order to put into the minds of the people a sense of appreciation of these values, I have made it my task to teach the congregation that the services of the teacher are worthy of the highest pay. We pay all our teachers what I believe is liberal compensation for the service which entails upon them two hours a week of time and the expectation that they prepare their work outside of the class room. The salaries are graded according to time of service and merit. Under present conditions, I consider it absolutely necessary and essential to pay the teachers. It is no reflection on the Rabbi's sincerity or zeal that he receives a salary to enable him to live. The same applies to every teacher. I think it an imposition on any teacher, especially if teaching be the profession of that individual, to take this service without adequate remuneration. I believe it is essential, in order to have a well-organized school, that we should have paid teachers.

**Q.** Why is it that the adolescent child is so indifferent to religious school instruction?

**A.** This question rests on an assertion which, in my judgment, is altogether too positive and sweeping.

Experience and observation make me doubt the truth of the assertion that all adolescents are indifferent. I have found many who have evinced a very deep interest. Such works as Starbuck's "The Psychology of Religion" and Stanley Hall's "Adolescence," provide exceedingly interesting and valuable studies bearing on the subject. Indeed, the period of hero-worship, of romance, and the awakening of the chivalric impulses and ideals would rather seem to be one profoundly susceptible to religious impressions. Indeed, because of this, Prof. Stanley Hall speaks in highest praise of the Confirmation Services of our youth in the Reform Synagogue.

Our judgment as to the proverbial indifference of the adolescent is prone to be a misjudgment. We fail to realize that with Confirmation the religious spirit is brought to an intense climax and thereafter allowed to lapse because we have made little or no provision for continued participation of our young people in either congregational or school activities. But even when efforts are made to provide such opportunity, comparatively few make use of them. It is not difficult to account for this. In the first place the force of precedent and tradition is lacking. It takes years to establish these, as the history of Confirmation or any other religious innovation proves. Once the current sets in their favor the succeeding generations naturally follow in the channel cut out.

However, the important fact remains that when religion has claimed the active interest of the child, it was due to parental authority. That authority, when adolescence arrives, can no longer be exercised with

unquestioned rigor without defeating its aim. The personality of youth, the rights of independent judgment, and the freedom of responsibility assert themselves and must be guided, not coerced. Unless the youth elects to share in the religious life it will not be true or warm-hearted. Compulsion here is apt to breed hostility that may be fatal. The fact is that the adolescent is engaged in making the most difficult adjustments of his whole life. From the simple carefree days of childhood the girl and boy now pass into the age of responsibility when they must choose and act for themselves. The college world, or the world of industry and commerce, opens to them. Society begins to cast its spell about them. They join clubs and fraternal orders. Let us not harass our adolescents. Give them time and sympathetic understanding and the force of consistent example and teaching to counteract hostile influences.

**Q.** To what extent can conduct be enforced in religious schools? How do you handle the "bad boy?"

**A.** It is a sorry school in which it is necessary to enforce conduct. The religious school must have a standard so high that questions of discipline will take care of themselves. This cannot be attained in a moment. It often takes years even to approximate it. I believe you can secure as fine discipline in a religious school as in the public school and with far less rigor. One of the simplest methods, according to my experience, is this: adopt in your school, as far as possible, the machinery to which the children are accustomed throughout the entire week. They will fall into the system as a matter of course. If, in the religious school,



they find a totally different method of procedure, they are obliged to readjust themselves and to learn from the beginning. You may take advantage of the drill the child has acquired throughout the week by using the same rules of order, of conduct, of keeping records, registration, marks, advancement, and promotion. You will find half the problem solved.

The other half is very much more difficult because it does not exist in the secular schools. It arises out of the fact that boys and girls come to the religious school in a totally different frame of mind. They come more or less in a holiday spirit. The week-day, secular attitude towards work has been cast aside. They are in a different environment, their associates are their nearest friends, relatives, and intimates. Moreover, they come with their Sabbath clothes on; the little girls with spangles and ribbons, the boys with their watches, pins, and gee-gaws. All these are sources of obstruction which become very serious. There is no patent method of overcoming this obstructive spirit. One secret of eliminating the necessity of enforcing discipline lies in the simple word "interest." Work by every means to secure and to hold the interest of your pupils. Fascinate them with the method, the manner, and the matter of instruction and they forget all about all these extraneous things. To get their interest requires on the part of the teacher ample preparation. The lesson must be well in hand, clearly outlined, and the plan of the lesson must be strictly followed. You must know not merely what the lesson requires but matter to fill out and expand it. The teacher must be versatile, ready for



emergencies, brimful of illustrations taken from the life of the child and within the scope of its experience. In this way you can eliminate many difficulties.

As to the "bad boy," cultivate him especially, keep him busy, and strive to make him your friend. I never would expell a child from the religious school. This means surrender. The worse the child, the more he needs the school. Of course, if the offense be criminal, the law intercedes and removes the child. The sympathy of the teacher should go out especially to the child that is undisciplined, because back of that child is invariably an undisciplined home, and most essential to success in dealing with the pupils is the co-operation of the home. But then, that is another story.

**Q.** Given an indifferent class of boisterous children, parents who do not co-operate, a mere two hours a week to develop character, teach Biblical History, Hebrew and ceremonies, hold assembly, and teach Jewish songs, is not a rabbi in difficulty?

**A.** Indeed he is. If you expect to go into the ministry and have an easy time you ought to resign now. You must anticipate difficulties. The object of these talks, if they are to have any effect, is to make you face the difficulties in advance, to give you some realization of what may confront you when you enter upon your post, and, if possible, to direct you as to how you may equip yourselves so that when you take charge of a school and find it a serious undertaking, you will not be helpless and feel that you must surrender in despair. Our object is to proffer you such guidance as you may draw from the experience of others who have wrestled

with like difficulties. In New York some time ago I had an interesting talk with Dr. Benderly, of the Bureau of Jewish Education. I said to him, "The problem of the congregational Religious School is much more difficult than is yours, for you get your boys and girls daily after their public school sessions, gather them into groups, hundreds at a time, and teach the Bible, the songs, and even Hebrew lessons on the screen. We must individualize our pupils and teach all subjects within but two hours a week." He pointed out to me that by intensive work one could do all this, and he said that in fact it could be done even more thoroughly. I took this to heart and applied it to my school, with the result that every minute of our time is utilized and not a moment is wasted. The work is planned in advance in every detail. Every teacher knows the moment the bell strikes what is to be done. Though the fire-bell ring for practice and the whole school be dismissed, yet the school resumes perfect order again the moment the children are back in their rooms. System is needed as much in running a religious school as in any business.

Q. The teaching of the Bible is very unpopular among children. How will you vitalize it? Everything in modern times is on a progressive plane. Do you not think that the teaching of the Bible in the Sunday school should follow the same course? How is it to be done?

A. The religious schools of all denominations have in recent years made notable strides in improving their methods. The Jewish Chautauqua Society is a pioneer

in this field. The Synagogue and School Extension Department of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations is rendering a service utterly neglected in the previous generations. The Religious Education Association of the United States has stimulated the schools of all denominations. The Jewish schools are probably abreast, and perhaps ahead, of other religious schools in this country in the application of the principles and methods of modern pedagogy to religious studies, and especially to the presentation of Bible history. Others are but now following us in working out the curriculum of graded classes.

It is quite possible, now, to make Bible study interesting to boys and girls. Let me cite a few examples. Manual work applied to Bible instruction is a new and excellent venture. We use it in our school and it has been exceedingly effective. Boys and girls are learning about Bible countries. We want them to have some visualized conception of the location of the countries, the rivers, valleys, cities, and towns in which all the things we teach them transpired. We ask them to make maps. They make elaborate pen and ink drawings, or mould them of papier-mache. They take great delight in the work, which is optional. When tasks are not required but voluntary it is wonderful how eager they all are to do them. The writing of papers on Biblical subjects is also effective in stimulating interest. The teacher will ask, "Who will give us an account of the life of Jeremiah," or whatever the lesson may be? Pictures are given to the pupils to illustrate these

papers. To write a story based on the pictures is an exercise that prevails in all our classes from the primary grades up. When a child is given a series of pictures and told to write a story it is a practical way of vitalizing instruction. One of the most unfailing and impressive modes of vitalizing Bible study with us has been the dramatization of Bible stories. One day a teacher came to invite me to her class and said, "I have assigned to my children the presentation of the story of the Golden Calf. I have asked them to read their different parts from their Bibles. One is to be Moses, one Aaron, and a group is to represent the Israelites." I went to the classroom and listened to the children. They were full of interest and enthusiasm. They read their story from the Bible and enacted the different parts with a keen and unwonted delight. It all became real to them. This spurred to ambition in other classes with the result that during a number of years past a fine spirit of emulation has developed among them and a really excellent series of Bible stories, dramatized and rendered by the pupils with appropriate scenery and costumes, now solves the problem of our school festival and other programs. The interest in Bible study has been at fever heat as the result of this practical method. Seizing upon the dramatic instinct so keen in youth and applying it thus redeems Bible study from dullness and the sense of remoteness, making it real and vital to the pupils.

Q. Why do Sabbath schools give such prominence to the chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah?

Would it not be advisable to substitute lessons from the lives of the rabbis, Jewish heroes, and saints?

A. I regret to learn that some of our schools still stuff the children with lists of kings and their dates. Bear in mind that we have two distinct disciplines under consideration, viz., Jewish History and Jewish Ethics. Both are essential factors of that education we are striving to impart. Both utilize the same materials, i. e. the story of Israel's life from the earliest records to the present. To give a succinct and intelligent idea of that marvelous story, the events and the lives of our leaders must be offered in some coherent or chronological order. But few dates are essential. It is a gross injustice to the subjects as well as to the student to give mere fragments or to stop short with the Biblical record. The tremendous force is thereby lost which inheres in tracing the unfoldment of a mighty tradition and the realization on the part of the student that, as heirs of that tradition, we are carrying forward the latest phases of the longest continuous and most heroic history of any people on earth.

Vital as is the realization hereof to the quickening of the Jewish consciousness, even more vital is the use of our history as a living illustration of the divine principles of morality in action, of a conscious religious motive in forming and inspiring our historic movement from its inception, through many deviations and defections, unwaveringly from the first on into the present. As a history of endurance for principle, of heroic suffering, of unflinching steadfastness in the face of a hostile world, as a constructive force, today as of old, in furthering



the cause of humanity, the facts of our history are of supreme significance and value. It must be apparent that, for the purpose of our religious school, Jewish history must be presented primarily as illustrative matter, because it shows Judaism in action. It reveals the glowing inspirations of our religion as impelling the great leaders, patriarchs, lawgivers, prophets, and sages, and directing the destinies of their followers. The Bible as history has its place in the more advanced stages of the curriculum. For moral instruction we should use biographical material and selected events, while for historical perspective we should present a survey or chronological summary in the highest classes.

**Q.** What about the miracles?

**A.** Educators agree that in all the world's literature nothing exceeds the simple beauty and naive charm of the wonder stories of the Bible for impressing the soul of the child. That period of life in which the hunger of fancy clamors to be fed with the marvelous, the strange, the miraculous, and the supernatural speedily passes. Reason begins to outgrow imagination. Conviction aspires to the throne where till now credulity had held unrivaled rule. Nature thus admonishes the teacher in terms demanding implicit obedience that the inquiries awakening in the reflective mind of youth dare not be ignored, glossed over, or evaded. They must be met with the candor of transparent honesty. It must be made clear that religion rests in the heart of an all-encircling world of mystery. We must confess to the vast ignorance that engulfs us and show how the earliest reactions to the mysterious awaken the awe of



credulity in the childhood of the race as in the childhood of each individual. A miracle is therefore the natural response to the unknown and the inscrutable. When reason awakes we react to mystery in a totally different way. We begin to question, to investigate, to make researches, eager to pluck out the heart of the mystery of which we are a part. In response to this effort there have come to men revelations of laws, of truths, of ideals that give us our glimpses of the divine. What is essential in our teaching is this: to hold fast to the sense of humility, of awe, of moral constraint, of reverence. Not how the ten commandments were given to us is vital, but that they were given. In the depths of each supernatural event lies the natural. The sanctions of morality and the inspirations to worship are intrinsic. Thus, step by step, stage by stage, must we follow the unfolding demands of youth and maturity in presenting the undying truths of religion.

**Q.** In your high school curriculum do you include the modern interpretation of the Bible?

**A.** Certainly. High school and college students are familiarized with the results of modern researches in reference to the text and authorship of the writings of Homer and Shakespeare. It is due them likewise to have an intelligent insight into what has been learned from a critical study of the Bible texts, from the deciphering of monuments, and from the absorbing story of the modern excavations in Bible lands that shed light upon the Scriptures. As it is necessary to be on guard lest in the one case the real treasures of Homer and Shakespeare be buried under the mountains of

mere textual criticism, so too there is danger that the moral and spiritual treasures of sacred writ may be obscured by the over-emphasis of these externals and the oft-times ephemeral theories of higher criticism.

Let us never forget that our aim throughout must be to provide nurture for the young mind and strength for the needs of the soul. The Bible is to serve us not so much for literary or even historical purposes as for religious uses, for it is still the world's best text-book of religion. But it must be used with intelligent discrimination. That which will best serve the child must be given to the child, and that which is best for the matured must be reserved for the ripened mind.

Q. Do you consider it essential to teach Hebrew in our Sabbath schools?

A. I believe it is highly essential to teach Hebrew in our schools. I know and regret all the difficulties which, because of the limitations of time, beset the task and make it so discouraging. Yet I believe we should hold on to and make the utmost of the opportunities we have and use every endeavor to improve them. Why? Because Hebrew is the language in which our religion has found its highest expression. It has been for centuries not only the literary language of the Jew, of the Bible and all the vast intellectual products of the Bible, but it is the language of our worship in all parts of the world and has been for generations. To abandon it, it appears to me, would be to sacrifice elements of spiritual value which it would be almost impossible to replace. I am not thinking so much of the intellectual side of what the pupil may get out of a knowledge of

Hebrew. This has a great value indeed. The girls and boys learn Greek, Latin, French, German, and other foreign languages. We should be the last, it seems to me, to underestimate the cultural advantage of our own great language. But I would emphasize rather the psychical aspect of this subject. There is assuredly a definite moral compulsion on us to teach Hebrew as long as we continue to have a word of Hebrew uttered in public or private worship by the Jew. We must educate our congregations at least to so much knowledge of Hebrew as will enable them to participate intelligently in the worship. Consciously or unconsciously they realize that to omit this would be to do violence to their inmost beings. It would mean to rend that subtle but no less real bond that binds all Jews, soul to soul. Thus it is quite impossible, it appears to me, to convey in English all the profound emotional value that lies in the pronouncement of the "Sh'ma," which is vibrant with the outcries and sanctified by the sublime steadfastness of the heroes, martyrs, and saints of Israel. The Catholic church is altogether too astute to throw aside Latin, and the Jewish church would be stultifying itself by throwing aside so precious a spiritual treasure as we have in the Hebrew language.

Q. Discuss the methods of teaching Hebrew to children. How do you make the subject interesting? What is the value of giving the children a smattering of Hebrew knowledge?

A. I will endeavor to answer these questions by giving you the testimony of an interesting experience. At a parents' meeting held a few years ago in my school,

Dr. Talcot Williams, then of Philadelphia, now head of the Pulitzer School of Journalism at Columbia University, was invited to give an address. Dr. Williams, who spent many years in the Orient, is a fine Hebrew and Arabic scholar. He expressed interest in all the Hebrew instruction imparted to our pupils. I took him from class to class. In the primary grades, ages seven to nine years, the children are taught to memorize the Sh'ma and some of the simple benedictions. In the intermediate grades, from nine to twelve years, the excellent little books, Numbers I and II, arranged by Dr. Benderly, of the New York Bureau of Education, are used. Object lessons, pictures, and the use of the most modern and approved methods of language study have vanquished the listlessness and irksomeness of other days. Under enthusiastic teachers, trained in our own school, a splendid spirit of emulation has been created. In the Junior classes, twelve to fourteen years, we use the Jewish Chautauqua Course book as an introduction to the Union Prayer Book. In the senior department, i. e. the pre-confirmation and confirmation classes, the Prayer Book is the text-book both for Hebrew and religious instruction. Pupils from this department volunteer to prepare to read and translate short portions from the Torah section the first week of each month, when we have the children attend the synagogue and participate in the service.

In each classroom, Dr. Williams found hanging upon the walls the exercises in Hebrew prepared throughout the year by the pupils. To these he gave special

attention and to my delight he devoted his talk to the parents in the Assembly Hall, to an enthusiastic approval of the work and to an impressive exposition of the value especially to Jewish people, of a knowledge of the sacred tongue. I recall his developing the thought of the precept, "The more languages a man knows, the more of a man is he." He illustrated how even a slight knowledge of a strange tongue enriches our mental grasp and how even a single foreign word opens a window through which we are permitted to get a glimpse of new, interesting, and enlarged horizons.

Our main trouble with Hebrew now is lack of time, not of interest. Hebrew is obligatory. To make it optional creates difficulties that are fatal. We cannot get all pupils to respond, and we fail totally with some. On the other hand, we have been able to get a group to continue advanced Hebrew in our High School Course.

**Q.** Are more than two sessions a week for the religious school desirable or practicable?

**A.** At the present time religious schools, as we know them, in connection with congregations are obliged to utilize the crumbs of time and opportunity which are left at the end of the week, after the pupil has been absorbed throughout the week days, as far as energy goes, in devoting himself to secular studies. It is this limitation of time which prompted the suggestion that we extend the number of years in the school term at the school over which I preside. From six we have advanced to a nine year course. This is required to prepare for Confirmation. Then the pupil is about 16 years of age. At best this affords only a grammar



school grade of instruction in religion. Therefore, opportunity is provided to continue the studies three years more, covering a high school course of which the confirmation class is the first year. This keeps us in touch with our pupils until they are about 19 years of age. Opportunity is further provided for such as we can interest to engage in individual work, in study clubs and circles. By this means we are aiming to equip those who are capable, for teaching in our school and for active social service work. No! Two hours a week between the ages of seven and thirteen is not enough to cover the whole range of Jewish history, ethics, and religion. Therefore all this effort to extend the studies throughout youth and adult life according to the old Jewish usage.

**Q.** Is the Jewish Day School desirable?

**A.** As a boy, I attended a Jewish parochial or day school. I felt much resentment that at four o'clock every day I was obliged to go to Hebrew school when I should have been out playing ball. When I entered the ministry I vowed that I would break up every school of that kind, wherever possible, in the interests of the children. I am happy to say that I have been instrumental in doing this in several places. The Gary system, now so much discussed, as I understand it, aims to loosen up the public school system in order to make it flexible in such a way as to include every activity of the child as part of his legitimate education. That which he does on the playground is not less important than that which he does in the class and assembly room, or in the laboratory or in his home tasks. If this plan can be worked out, the religious school may come into its rights, and we



shall be able to secure some sort of legitimate opportunity for imparting to our pupils the knowledge which we desire them to have and the influence and impressions we desire to bring to bear upon them in their religious life.

**Q.** Discuss the problem of Sabbath School equipment.

**A.** If I may be permitted to make a personal reference without violating the proprieties, I would like to say that this and kindred questions are answered in detail in "The New Education in Religion," a book in which I have worked out a curriculum which is the basis for the course books of the Correspondence School for Teachers conducted by the Jewish Chautauqua Society. In regard to the problem of Sabbath School equipment, note that in the office of the Department of Synagogue and School Extension of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, there is an exhibit of all kinds of materials and devices for the equipment of religious schools, such as maps, ceremonial objects, books, desks, stereopticon views, wall pictures, etc. Everything that will help the teacher to do intensive work in the two hours session of the school should be utilized in all up-to-date schools.

**Q.** How can one overcome the religious indifference of parents as reflected in the children?

**A.** This is a problem which has long agitated the minds of our rabbis and teachers. It has been the theme of many discussions at conferences and assemblies. It is impossible to answer it in an off-hand manner by reason of the fact that the problem is so vast, so

complex, so far-reaching. Many are the methods that have been tried, and are being tried, to endeavor to overcome the difficulties arising out of the indifference of parents.

There is a retroactive way of reaching the parents through the children. It is not always effective, but has been quite successful in many cases. The religious school sends the child home inspired with enthusiasm for the Jewish religion and eager to find in the home life some expression to satisfy that need. Dead indeed is that parent who will not attempt to make some response to the requests of a little child. I will illustrate from a recent experience. The week before Pesach, in the school over which I preside, we had a large gathering of parents who were attracted by what promised to be an entertaining and interesting program. The object of the meeting was to reintroduce the Seder into Jewish homes where this home service had fallen into disuse. The method of making the appeal was quite striking. By way of introduction I spoke quite briefly about the origin and significance of the Seder. I showed them some beautiful copies of the Haggadah and other quaint prints and spoke of the necessity of recreating the ancient and medieval form of observance so as to make it acceptable to the taste and understanding of the present hour. This talk was followed by a beautiful tableau reproducing Moritz Oppenheim's well-known painting which depicts the Seder. To serve as an explanation of the tableau there was a translation of that portion of Heine's story, "The Rabbi of Bacharach," which describes the Seder. This was followed by a

practical illustration of the method of conducting the Seder in modern families. Rabbi Eli Mayer conducted it with members of the family around the table. The symbols of the festival were explained in answer to the questions put by the children. They sang the melodies that are sung on that occasion. Copies of the words were distributed and all were invited to join in. This worked up a high degree of interest and enthusiasm. The result was that we had many calls for copies of the Haggadah and promises to resume the Seder in the home. On Hanukkah we gave out Menorahs and candles. What parent could refuse to light them for the child? The result has been an awakening on the part of the parents, who have gained an insight into the meaning and the spiritual value of these observances and of the dignity, the sweetness, the sanctity imparted to the home life when they are restored.

**Q.** How can the co-operation of the home with the religious school be secured?

**A.** By the same method through which the co-operation of parents with teachers is secured in other schools. Opportunities must be provided for the parents to meet the teachers and confer in a friendly way about the child in whose training they share. We have tried a large general meeting of parents and also meetings of the parents of the pupils of each class separately. With them some special and timely subject is discussed, such as tardiness, regularity in attendance, home work, Hebrew, religion in the home, synagogue attendance. The parents of the confirmants usually have a special meeting to discuss the proprieties and modes of procedure

which may enhance or ruin the religious value of this service. A frank discussion of the excesses and evils often attendant on the social side of the Confirmation celebration should be held at these meetings. At such a meeting recently held the parents decided to mitigate the abuses of present-giving by breaking up the custom which had crept in of having each pupil in the class send a gift to every other member of the class. It was resolved that all gifts between class members, even though relatives or intimate friends be eliminated. The expensive gift to the rabbi, creating emulation in successive classes, was at my request abolished years ago. Instead, each class presents to the Congregation, School or to the Library, a simple token in the spirit in which university classes plant the ivy or, by some gift, deepen the ties of devotion to their beloved Alma Mater.

An exhibit in each class-room of manual work, maps, essays, Hebrew exercises, etc., is exceedingly helpful in winning the interest of the home. School reports at intervals are of service; better still a personal letter from the teacher when occasion requires; but best of all a visit of the teacher to the home is of inestimable value in securing that direct personal co-operation so priceless to the good effects of the school on the life of the pupil. The aid of the visiting committee of the Sisterhood is exceedingly helpful to the teacher, the stress of whose daily tasks affords little time for personal visits.

**Q.** In urging adults to observe Jewish ceremonies, would you insist that they observe ceremonies which for them have lost their symbolic value?

A. Certainly not. Unless these things have an appeal that is real and genuine, unless you can make them see not only the aesthetic and artistic, but especially the moral and spiritual force of these symbols, the symbols are dead. That is why we have been compelled to "reform." Reform means to alter, modify or recast a form in the religious life, so as to make it accord with the intelligence, the conviction, and the quickened sentiment of the person who performs the religious act.

Q. Would you sacrifice your congregational school for a religious school supported by the Jewish community at large?

A. It is difficult to make a sweeping reply to this inquiry because so much depends upon the local conditions. As a rule, when you can get a community to engage unitedly in Jewish work, you will do well to combine efforts. The possibilities for such combined efforts are fewer in the larger cities than in the smaller towns, because in the cities the people continue longer to remain isolated and strongly segregated into groups. We find them organized according to the successive tides of immigration into America: the earliest Sephardic (Spanish-Portuguese), the Dutch, the German, the Polish, the Russian, the Rumanian, and the more recent Oriental Jewish immigrants. Let us be fair and realize that it is the normal preference of people of like antecedents, habits, customs, and usages to get together. They understand each other, they sympathize with each other, and therefore they can engage in all social, charitable, educational, and religious



enterprises much more satisfactorily among themselves than with others. The progress of co-operation is slow because the conflict of jarring view-points is inevitable. The attitude of the older, more experienced, and more firmly settled towards the newer immigrant, however well meant, is often misunderstood, suspected and resented. Under these conditions, the surrender of a well-organized school would be hazardous.

The unexpected is happening before our eyes, however. The slow processes of attrition are being accelerated by the war and its associations as by no previous experience. The various elements of the Jewish community of each city and of the whole country are drawing together, as never before, under the stress of common impulses and needs. The Jewish War Relief and kindred movements are bound to react favorably towards a closer co-operation in all Jewish communal endeavors in the future.

The different groups hitherto entirely self-centered, are coming into closer relationship with one another. Each congregation, heretofore interested in itself alone, is learning to co-operate with its sisters. The Jewish children in Philadelphia unaffiliated with congregational life are under the care of the Hebrew Sunday School founded by Rebecca Gratz. There are now twelve branch schools and some five thousand pupils. Similar communal schools are sure to spring up everywhere in the future and will merit your help.

**Q.** Do you think the Bible should be the only textbook in the religious school? Do you think that our religious schools should be only Bible schools?



A. I think that, fundamentally, they should be Bible Schools, but remember that the Bible is the inspiration for all our life and literature. Talmud Torah is our broad term for education.

Q. Do you favor efforts to conduct social service activities? I would like to suggest that the idea of the social service consciousness should be, not something that can be read between the lines, but a part of the fundamental purpose of the religious education and should be carried out in practical social service activities. Do you not think so?

A. Yes, I am in hearty accord with this very suggestion. In my own school it is done. Every class has a fund and these funds are contributed for social work of a definite kind. For instance, one class recently voted to send a pair of crutches to a boy, another voted to send a boy to a summer camp. Children are readily and eagerly enlisted in the service of other children, once they realize the need which contrasts with their own condition of life.

Q. Should there be a place for either Anti-Zionism, Non-Zionism or Zionism in the religious schools?

A. This is a new issue. In my school there is a free discussion, in confirmation, post confirmation, and adult classes, of all living issues of Jewish life. We insist that our pupils should learn about Orthodoxy as well as Reform, and in the same spirit Zionism is fully considered.

Q. You seem to consider the fundamental purpose of Jewish education to be instruction in ideals of reverence, awe, and humility. You spoke at the

beginning of your address about consciousness. Do you mean to implant the moral consciousness, the ethical consciousness, or the religious consciousness through the school?

A. The Jewish consciousness.

Q. It seems to me that what is necessary in the reform religious school is not merely the teaching of these principles but the development of the idea of brotherhood among Jews to give boys and girls a feeling of fellowship towards all types of Jews. Where you have boys and girls who are afflicted with the desire to be anything else but Jews, is it not important to give them not only the religious consciousness but also the group consciousness?

A. The one is involved in the other. Thus when you teach the child about the Passover, you must convey the sublime principle of freedom and when you keep the Passover observances in the home and in the Synagogue, the sentiment of fellowship with all Jews is necessarily imparted.

Q. May I ask how you account for the fact that religious education among the Jews at the present time does not seem to appeal to the children or to the parents? Our religious schools do not seem to be taken as seriously as they ought to be. Is this due to the parent or to something lacking in the rabbi and teacher?

A. This is a very difficult question. It is not limited to Jewish people. I think that Jewish people do show their love for education. Our schools and

colleges are crowded with Jewish pupils in a percentage perhaps exceeding their due proportion. When it comes to religious education they seem to be lacking. The general answer is that we are living in a materialistic age. This is an era of readjustment for multitudes who have swarmed into America. They have been compelled to make readjustments in their pursuits, in their language, and in their view-points. Such a revolutionary change in life is bound to affect their religious attitude. But the readjustment is beginning to stabilize their religious life also. A few years ago a census was made of the congregation over which I preside, of the families, including the children therein, and a comparison was made with the enrollment of the school. This was preliminary to a vigorous campaign to secure the attendance of the children. I am able to report that the number of parents who do not send their children to the school is now almost negligible.



### III

## THE RABBI AS PREACHER

Nearly one hundred years have elapsed since Leopold Zunz produced his epoch-making work, "Die Gottesdienstlichen Vortraege der Juden." Under the light of his brilliant and searching scholarship, the place of the public discourse in the synagogue was definitely determined, and its history and development from the earliest times clearly traced. Zunz was impelled to these researches in order to refute the empty charge that the sermon in the synagogue was an innovation, indeed an imitation of the custom of the church ('Hukath Hago-yim). In subsequent studies Jacob Freudenthal revealed the very contrary as the fact, viz., that the church from earliest times had been largely dependent on the example and inspiration of the synagogue.

The two streams of literary activity which in the Jewish schools yielded the *Halacha* and the *Haggadah*, found their place in the Synagogue through the voice of the *Meturgeman* who expounded the weekly lesson of the *Torah* (Pentateuch) and the *Haftarah* (Prophets); and the *Darshan* who, with glowing imagination, through the wealth of the Midrashic parables and homilies, applied the moral and religious lesson to the life of the people.

"The one indigenous science which Israel has created and developed, after having produced, during the first



long period of its history, the actual subject of the science, the Bible itself, was the science of exegesis," says Wilhelm Bacher (Jewish Encyc., article "Bible Exegesis"). And he adds, "Modern Judaism is especially characterized by two reforms founded on the study and exposition of the Bible, viz. the reinstatement of the Bible in its legitimate place in the instruction of the young, where it had long been secondary to the study of the Talmud, and the sermon in the Synagogue, based as it is on the Biblical text."

Teaching is the basis of all preaching, and all that has been said of the rabbi as teacher in the school has added importance with reference to the rabbi as preacher in the pulpit. The function of the rabbi as preacher looms so large today that we would do well to remember that we are participating in a reaction against the era which crowded out the sermon altogether to make way for a form of worship that overflowed with repetitions and redundancies and was clogged with numerous *Piyuttim*, or liturgical poems. We are now in danger of making the worship of such minor importance as to reduce it to a mere routine. The people feel this and show it by the prevailing discourtesy of tardiness which lands them in their seats just in time for the sermon and often prompts their withdrawal immediately after its delivery. In no small measure they take their cue from the pulpit, when the manner of conducting the service is slovenly and perfunctory, or again so sanctimonious or declamatory as to deaden rather than quicken the sentiments of reverence and devotion. I know of an instance when a rabbi, asked to read services on a public occasion on

which a colleague was to preach, indignantly refused, saying, "I will not play 'Hazan to him.'" Apart from its unpardonable discourtesy, this action showed a most lamentable and low estimate of the honor, the dignity, and the sacred importance of the function of the leader in worship. On the other hand, I know of a devout member of a congregation who declared that just to hear a Psalm read or a prayer offered prompted her to attend the services of a certain minister, for it gave her help and inspiration for the whole week. The fact is that it is a far more difficult task to conduct public worship effectively than to deliver a public discourse. I maintain this to be true, because in the reading of Scripture and in rendering the liturgy one must be entirely oblivious of his own personality. His soul must be absorbed in and become a part of the soul of Israel, which has expressed itself in utterances sanctified by generations of devout emotion and in them revealed the inmost depths of its yearnings, its trials and triumphs, its sorrows and joys. To read Scripture with effect demands preparation. No less so is it necessary to lend impressiveness to liturgical prayer, that one realize its full meaning and enter into its spirit. A careful study of the Biblical section is imperative in order that the historic setting and aim may be apparent, else they cannot be intelligently conveyed. One cannot be too grateful for such quickening sources as the definitive work of Professor Ismar Ellbogen, "*Der Juedische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*," and Dr. Israel Abraham's "*Annotations*" to the Book of Prayers with English translation, by Dr

Simeon Singer, which have come to reinforce the earlier studies of Louis Dembitz on "Jewish Services in the Synagogue and Home." These works help us to draw deep draughts of inspiration from the fountains of our noble liturgy. They help us to feel the pious impulses that have moved the souls of the devout through many generations.

Personally I find no task quite so trying as the casual one of opening a public meeting with prayer. In the midst of secular interests, commonplace material concerns, and often in surroundings which are barren of all that is conducive to the earnestness of prayer, it devolves upon the minister, called often without a moment's previous notice, to create an atmosphere of reverence and transform the whole attitude of mind and heart of the people to one of worshipfulness. In the synagogue at least the associations are helpful, and indeed, when the service is genuinely impressive and heartfelt, the hearts of the people are attuned and readily responsive to the chords which the sermon will strike. I have heard a layman say of a visiting minister that the slovenliness of his appearance, of his bearing, and of his listlessness during the worship had so provoked him in advance that he was prejudiced against the sermon before the preacher began to speak. This may seem trifling, but it becomes important in view of the fact that every real sermon is a revelation of one's self. Therefore nothing is insignificant that is part of yourself; your bearing, is it reverential; your voice, does it ring true; your manners, are they mere mannerisms; your message, does it resound from the depths of your

own soul or is it a mere echo? The natural tendency to copy other speakers is fraught with a singular danger. While imitation is the highest form of compliment, the danger of paying this compliment consists in repeating the striking peculiarities and eccentricities, often the faults rather than the virtues, of your model. "The great man," says Emerson, "is one who reminds us of no other man." He who would aspire to be a great preacher must before all else be himself, just his plain natural self, without poses or affectations.

It is apparent, then, that teaching in the pulpit is exalted manifoldly above mere teaching in the classroom. "The object of the sermon," to quote Dr. Maybaum (*Juedische Homiletik*, p. 2), "is not merely *Belehrung*, instruction, but also *Erbauung*, edification."

The "lecture" in the pulpit is properly directed to conveying information and deepening knowledge. The sermon, however, aims at something more. Through the channel of the intellect the hearer is to be persuaded and convinced, to the end that motives become purified, the emotions exalted, the conscience quickened, and the will consecrated. To the factors that are educational the sermon must add the elements that are inspirational.

This is indeed a very lofty ideal, and, in the ordinary grind of preaching week after week, and year after year, may seem in its elusiveness but rarely attainable. Let me, by way of testimony, recommend to your attention an admirable address, "Why the Clergy Fail," which is to be found among the published sermons of that genial London minister, the Rev. Simeon Singer. Speaking to the students at "Jews' College," in his delightful and

helpful way, he makes this confession: "Let me admit forthwith that it is in the very nature of things that any man occupying the position of a minister of religion, I care not who he is, must fail, often and lamentably. The character and magnitude of his office make this result inevitable. For myself, I marvel at my own temerity."

It was this very characteristic of humility that made him by common consent the most vital, effective, and beloved preacher that English Jewry has known.

The practical task of preparing sermons will tax your energies as a rabbi more than will any other effort you will be called upon to make. A young colleague once wrote me in a despairing tone, asking, "Where in the world do you get subjects to speak on week after week? I am at the end of my string and do not know what to do." I cited to him in reply my own kindred experience. After I had met the exacting demands of my first four weeks in the pulpit, sermons for the eve and morning for each of the Sabbaths and holidays of the month of Tishri, I was totally exhausted. I felt as though I had told the people well-nigh all I had learned while at college. Where should I find topics and materials for future sermons? I confided my bewilderment to a friendly local clergyman who reassured me from his own experience of thirteen years that with each advancing year he had found materials multiplying and topics springing up on every side, pleading, as it were, to be selected. I have since verified that statement by my own experiences, and venture to suggest that you cannot begin too soon to train your minds to the habit of seeking for and carefully storing up notes for future



sermons. I do not now refer merely to the notes of your class-room studies and readings, both at the University and at the College. Of their value you are fully aware. I refer to the personal memoranda of your own thoughts, products of your own observations and experiences, your own difficulties and perplexities in your relations with others, and of your own mental, moral, and spiritual struggles. They may be very crude, and hereafter you may smile at them out of the maturer experience of advancing years. But they will have a value as the autobiography of your own soul, and will enable you to enter with sympathy and understanding into the kindred history of other souls to whom you are to give the counsel, the comfort, and the inspiration of your sermon. Said one old-time preacher, "First apply yourself to the text, then apply the text to yourself." One preaches to himself first, and thereby to others. Ideas do not spring up spontaneously. They grow and you must tend them and nurture them as a gardener his flowers. Then, too, you may enjoy the divinest exhilaration that can be experienced, the flush of original creative effort.

The botanist is on the alert, in all his wanderings, for new specimens of the earth's teeming plants. The geologist finds a revelation of nature in every wayside stone and eagerly collates his specimens. The preacher must likewise have his mind directed, in all he sees, and in all he hears and reads, to search out the hidden veins of moral and spiritual truth imbedded in all of life's experiences. This is the precious ore he must treasure up, some day to be refined into the pure gold of sermonic

materials. It is marvelous, as has often been noted, how even every broken and discarded fragment stored up in the attic of the brain some day, when light is flashed upon it, reveals undreamed-of beauties and values.

But how to begin on your sermon preparation? No two men are alike, and so too, fortunately, no two preachers are alike. Each must find the method that is best for himself. Your first thought at the beginning of the week is directed to the Hebrew Calendar. There is an immediate suggestion in the title of the Sabbath of the week. It directs you at once to some appropriate lesson either from the section of the *Torah* or the *Haftarah*. There is surely some lesson there on which the congregation has a right to anticipate elucidation. There is a decided advantage in following the cycle of readings and the order of the recurring festivals and holy days, for they insure a renewal and deepening of those eternal verities of our faith which are enshrined in their observance. In the selection of some appropriate and definite theme I ask myself, "What do I want to teach this Sabbath?" I must wish to teach it. I must be interested myself else I cannot hope to interest others. That which today most deeply concerns life must concern me. Nothing human is alien to the Jewish pulpit. Something in the congregation, in the Jewish community, in the concerns of Israel at large, may claim and hold my attention. Or it may be a matter of general public welfare, municipal, state, or national, which it is the duty of the pulpit to clarify by applying the eternal standards of morals and religion. Since the war I have heard preachers say, "Oh, it is so

hard to preach now, harder than it has ever been." People declare that all the idealism we have cherished has been sacrificed and that "nothing is left of religion." For my part I believe that nothing is left but religion. We have seen the fiasco of materialism. All the vaunted achievements of culture, industry, commerce, art, economics, and science have been perverted to the ends of destruction. Religion alone maintains its deathless proclamation that not by might nor by power, but only by divine principle can human order be restored and maintained. It is inevitable that when the appeal to force shall have exhausted itself, the real battle of principles will have to be fought out with intellectual and spiritual weapons.

There is an abundance, not a dearth of themes for sermons. Thus will it ever be, as long as you contrast man as he is with man as he ought to be; the ideal father, son, brother, friend, neighbor, and citizen with the real; or the ideal woman with the real; the ideal home, school, city, state, with the real; the human family as it is with the human family as it will be when men who prate of brotherhood and those who worship God as Father will realize, indeed, his common Fatherhood to all His children.

Once you have chosen the specific theme to which you will devote your discourse for the week, you will find how, as the magnet attracts all the particles of metal that lie near it, your thoughts will draw from memory, from your readings, from those hidden and unsuspected treasures buried in your subconsciousness, abundant stores of material. Everything that will occur during

the week will seem to be grist for your mill. Indeed you will have to learn to separate the grain from the chaff. You may have too much grain. Be sparing! Some of it will keep for another day. When I preached my maiden sermon from Dr. Isaac M. Wise's pulpit, in Cincinnati, he favored me with this criticism: "That was no sermon. You squandered your materials. You had matter enough for three discourses. One idea is enough. The people cannot assimilate more. Illustrate the one idea from different points of view."

Some years ago I exchanged pulpits with a New York colleague and we pledged ourselves in advance to report on the impression our discourses would make, his on my people and mine on his people. I had a very favorable report to send him. He informed me that the most intelligent man in his congregation had made the criticism that I had given them but one idea. I rejoiced that after years of drill I had achieved what Dr. Wise had enjoined.

Having then an idea, a precept, a definite message which is in your heart and which yearns to find adequate expression, you confront the problem of actual preparation. You want the firm foundation of a biblical text on which to base your pronouncement and from which to evolve its deepest spiritual implications. You will rarely search in vain, either in the weekly Sidrah from the Torah, or in the lesson of the Haftarah. I do not underestimate the value of this, the oldest system of "International Bible Study" known to the world, when I admonish you that if the text is not forthcoming, do not use a text as a mere pretext, a point of departure, to

be quoted and then scorned. The assigned section, which may be made up of mere genealogies or a description of the details of the Tabernacle, may fail to respond to your need. If so, do not hesitate to look elsewhere. Indeed, often where no special theme of interest offers itself, I go at once to the other parts of the Bible and never do its inspired pages fail to extend their texts like pleading hands, begging to be taken. It remains forever true as Ben Bag Bag declared, "Turn it and turn it over again, for everything is in it, and stir not from it for thou canst have no better rule than this." (*Aboth* 6:25.)

Your college instruction in homiletics provides you with the technique of sermon writing. It would, therefore, be a work of supererogation on my part to enter upon that phase of the subject. This practical experience I may, however, be permitted to offer. In the earliest days of my ministry at Mobile, Alabama, I was privileged to go to New Orleans from time to time especially as Secretary of the Southern Rabbinical Association, of which Dr. Gutheim was head and Rev. I. L. Leucht a moving spirit. The sturdy force which had made Gutheim a hero to the South of epidemic and of Civil War times, and the volatile enthusiasm of Leucht, both influenced me mightily. On one occasion in his study, Leucht took from his shelf the latest homiletical work and handing it to me, asked, "Have you read Jellineck's 'Sh'ma Yisroel Sermons?'" I confessed that I had not, and what was more, frankly declared that I never read sermons. Amazed at this confession, he inquired into the cause and I admitted that it was because I feared that I might unconsciously



plagiarize. Then he read me a lecture I have never forgotten. With burning indignation he remonstrated, "Artists travel to remotest lands that they may study as models the works of the world's greatest sculptors and painters, and you expect to preach in ignorance of the masterpieces of our great Jewish preachers!" This wholesome rebuke served to set me right.

It was on the occasion of the remarkable funeral of Dr. Gutheim, in which the whole Southland united in a most extraordinary tribute in honor of a rabbi, that the much mooted question of the memorized or extempore address was decided for me. The most eminent divine of the southern metropolis was a Rev. Palmer, popularly known as "the Beecher of the South." He pronounced a eulogy which took not more than fifteen minutes for its delivery, but which was a classic in its style. Its gems of thought, radiant with the light of beauty, were set in a coronet of rich sentiment, and the encircling band bore the trenchant words that became the inscription on the tomb of the dead: "He was a man to be found when wanted, and when found, to be trusted."

I learned from Dr. Palmer that he had spent one hour pacing his study prior to the funeral and had formulated in his mind the address he gave with such masterly eloquence. I learned from him that there is no such thing as extempore speaking. All preaching must be prepared. Your choice is between a discourse that is thought out but not committed to writing and one that is written out and committed to memory. To write out carefully and painstakingly to memorize is slavish

toil. I endured it for five years before I ventured on my first timid effort to speak without written preparation. There is no way to evade a like drill if you would strive for accuracy in the use of words, for the cultivation of a direct and individual style, and for guarding against the unpardonable sin of preaching the long sermon that wearies and so defeats its own purpose. However, the memorized sermon is never so effective and powerful as the unwritten sermon. The manuscript, even though hidden, somehow will not remain entirely concealed, but obtrudes itself, consciously or unconsciously, between the speaker and the hearer. The written discourse makes for definiteness of statement, avoidance of repetition, and wandering from the theme, but it lacks in spontaneity and warmth. It is best for the academic scholarly address, but for the pulpit that aims to be illuminating and inspirational the mechanics of a memorized set form of words is rarely effective. It may take years of practice to conquer this difficulty.

Both kinds of discourse must be carefully thought out in the quiet of the study where reasoning and reflection are at their best. The unwritten discourse has the unquestioned advantage that it responds to the inspiration that flows from the hearts of the hearers. The speaker is free to suit the words to the inspiration of the moment. Holding fast to the reflective or prepared side of the discourse, the speaker is free, not alone to choose his words (and he must have the words at ready command) but what is of even more importance, he is free to let fancy soar and give imagination full play. These faculties are dormant in the dullness of the study,

while under the excitations of public speech they throb with life. But the imagination, too, must be trained. Every statement should be illustrated. Illustrations are the windows of the mind. Beecher, in his famous "Lectures on Preaching," declared that "a sermon without illustrations is like a building without windows." You may draw your illustrations from nature, from literature, from history, but the most telling are those that lie nearest in the most familiar objects and experiences of every day. The rich poetic and figurative language of the Bible, the wealth of the Midrashic parables and allegories, are our peculiar heritage. These we should delight to utilize and develop. He is a very unwise rabbi who neglects or slights them. The Jewish congregation has a decided taste and preference for those fragrant flowers that grow in the gardens of Jewish fancy. What makes sermons so dull and prosy for most people is that they are too didactic. The preacher never rises above being a teacher. The teacher is the vehicle of thought. He is permitted to remain objective in his presentation. Not so the preacher. The teacher addresses himself to the mind. The preacher rises to a higher appeal, for "the mind is lesser than the truth it strives to comprehend." He must be the teacher plus something else. That something else is his personality. He must be subjective. He must put into his discourses, under proper control, his whole being, his body, soul and mind. All that mysterious quality we name personal magnetism, eloquence, soulfulness, must pass from the depths of his being to that of his hearers. As the rabbis have declared,

דברים היוצאים מן הלב נכנסים אל הלב  
“Only words that well from the heart will enter the heart.”

This is a power that cannot be assumed because it must be sincere. It must be the man himself speaking, and as the man grows in character his sermons grow in effect. It is the man behind the sermon, not the verbiage or rhetoric, that counts. Mere attitudes are repulsive, and in the presence of the great realities of sacrifice and sorrow, temptation and shame, struggle and triumph, mere platitudes are barren. Rant and scolding into which preaching sometimes degenerates is not to be confused with just and timely rebuke which, because it is rare, is so telling. Personalities in the pulpit are never admissable. “Lo Ha-kapdon Melamed.” If a “man of temper cannot teach” much less can he preach. Every occasion on which you speak you must consider important. No man knows what fateful issue may hang upon his words. There is no time at which the rabbi may ignore the fact that by virtue of his office he is, in every public utterance, the representative and exponent of the cause of Israel. “Your sermons are too Jewish” is the plaint of a certain type of our people, but unless the sermon be devoted to the elucidation of the Jewish viewpoint, whatever the theme, unless it breathe the Jewish spirit throughout, the rabbi has not justified himself as a Jewish preacher. It is all the more imperative that this truth be emphasized in a world which has so persistently misrepresented the Jewish standpoint as being narrow and illiberal. The attitude of the Jewish preacher must not be apologetic, but assertive. This it cannot be unless it be

constructive. It cannot be constructive if it rest on mere negations. The rabbi as a preacher must have definite and settled convictions. I congratulate you, young gentlemen, on the superior advantages you possess over those which were ours, who were your predecessors as students of this college. We had neither text-books nor works of reference in the English language. You have at your command the splendid range of works which have since been provided, from Mielziner's "Introduction to the Talmud" to Dr. Kohler's monumental volume on "Jewish Theology." Through these and numerous publications in various languages you have ready access to sources whence you may draw authoritative materials with which to build, each one for himself, a firm structure of definite convictions on which to base your ministry. To achieve this each must solve for himself certain ethical problems to which consideration will be given in the next lecture.



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q.** Our boys who go out for the first time to preach in small towns must, by college orders, preach sermons prepared by others. Do you not think that a student who studies here for four years ought to write his own sermons?

**A.** My answer is that the experiences of your faculty make them better judges of this matter than I am.

**Q.** Do you not think that the motive prompting the early reformers to adopt the sermon, as well as other reforms, such as taking off the hat, etc., was that they wished to copy the Gentiles? Was not all the historical justification an afterthought?

**A.** I think this question is a somewhat contemptuous reflection on the men who gave a solid foundation to the Reform movement. Read the article on "Reform Judaism" by Dr. E. G. Hirsch, in the Jewish Encyclopedia, also the works there cited, and Dr. David Philipson's "The Reform Movement in Judaism."

**Q.** Would it not be a good idea, in order to discourage the undue stress on the sermon, to abolish the custom of preaching once or twice every Sabbath and thus emphasize prayer?

**A.** This is a very good idea, and it might be well in some cases to abolish preaching altogether. Unless the preacher really has a message, preaching week after week grows mechanical. One cannot always be in a ferment. I have not hesitated at times to share with

my people some sermon that has stirred me deeply, one of Jellinek's or of some other master spirit. We now have intensive preaching twice a week from Rosh Hashanah until the Shabuoth holidays, and then there is a lapse for most people during the summer months. We lay up a store for them, as it were, so that they may have spiritual food during the long interval when nothing will be provided.

At one time, I proposed to abolish Friday evening lectures, but before I did so I went among the people and got fifty to sign papers that they would agree to come to a class in which we would hold instruction on some Biblical or other Jewish theme. We had thereafter simply our regular Sabbath eve service without a sermon, and then we had a meeting, at another time which Dr. Marcus Jastrow and I conducted together. Our informal Bible talks at these meetings did more to put a measure of religious thought and sentiment into the people than years of sermons possibly could. I am much in sympathy with the suggestion that we have a minimum of sermons and cease to let them overshadow either the worship or the instruction. At every service a brief, timely, and impressive prayer should be offered by the rabbi. I know that this fully answers the devout worshipper's hunger for a word of inspiration or comfort and help—for that confession has often been made to me.

**Q.** Should a sermon close with a short prayer?

**A.** This was the general custom in former generations. It is a matter to be left to the exaltation of the moment, largely. If your sermon puts you in a

prayerful mood, it is the thing for you to do. If your sermon is upon some practical issue that is apart from and out of touch, for the moment, with that which has to do with a prayerful spirit and attitude, do not drag in a prayer at the end. Use your discretion and best judgment and consider also the sentiment and emotions of the moment in deciding the matter.

**Q.** What do you think of a system of prayer leaflets to replace the prayer book in order to insure variety and hence interest in prayers?

**A.** I do not think well of this. If variety in prayers be needed, let this variety come from you as leader in worship, from the prayer which comes directly out of your own heart and soul—the prayer which you feel you need and know your people need and feel. As a rule, at each service I give a prayer in which I try to voice what seems to me the religious need of the congregation at the time. Apart from this, I still hold fast to the Prayer Book. Our people love the liturgy. Without any liturgy the minister is taxed with the overwhelming task of recreating, week after week, the devotional spirit that shall not fail to edify and uplift. There is danger that much repetition tends to make the service mechanical. This is not the fault of the liturgy but of the individual who grows mentally indolent and fails to rise to the true attitude of worship. It is incumbent on the worshipper to make the conscious effort to respond with the heart and mind. One does not really weary of those classic utterances which have proven themselves gems of priceless worth. You cannot improve on the Psalms. Our liturgy is made up of the finest

outpourings of the Jewish spirit, and we cannot afford to sell these for any substitute, especially in an era which is not noted for the genius of prayer. No! this leaflet system does not appeal to me.

Q. Would the retention of the cantor and his traditional place in the service be of value?

A. This is largely a matter of fashion and taste. For a large congregation that can afford to indulge in the expense of an additional man in the pulpit as an auxiliary to the choir it is well and good. There is a certain charm about that mode of worship which has impressed itself on the Jewish spirit. I had no cantor while rabbi in Mobile or in Kansas City, but I found one installed in Philadelphia. In the larger communities it is quite the rule, as it is abroad, to have the precentor. I see no principle at stake in such matters. Where there is no principle I never raise an issue. When it comes to a principle, I take a firm stand and fight. My congregation likes chanting. I see no reason why they should not have that as well as the music by the choir.

Q. Would you advise a rabbi to omit prayers from the Union Prayer Book with which his beliefs do not coincide and which, therefore, he cannot read honestly and sincerely?

A. Let a rabbi prove circumspect in taking liberties with the Prayer Book. If he be a rabbi grown gray in years, a man who has achieved a place of authority by reason of his knowledge, experience, and character, let him assume that authority. If, after long deliberation and careful study, you come to the conclusion that you cannot subscribe to certain prayers in the Union

Prayer Book, refer the matter to the Conference. I would not fight from the outside but from the inside. I would go to the Conference and say, "Here is something you say with your lips but do not believe with your hearts. It must be expunged."

Perhaps you may err in your understanding of the prayers. Remember, we zealously safeguard to all the liberty of interpretation. There are Jewish methods of interpretation, radical and orthodox. Thus you have a right to interpret in your way, *תורה צוה לנו משה* "the law which Moses commanded us." We have no one method of interpreting revelation nor have we been so narrow in any generation that we have not allowed the fullest latitude in the interpretation of every doctrine. Read Dr. Kohler's "Jewish Theology" and you will find yourself restrained from hasty judgment in this matter.

**Q.** The service in the synagogue is a one-man affair. What methods would you suggest of creating a religious service in which the entire congregation would be active participants? Do you think this can be done by set forms of prayer such as the Union Prayer Book?

**A.** A most excellent question, and one which has given a great deal of concern to the man in the pulpit who is aiming to work with the congregation. I can tell you something of what others have done and what I have tried to do. Congregations have misinterpreted many things about Reform, and have used the modification and abrogation of certain ceremonies as a pretext for laxity in all things. To secure the proper decorum in worship, Reform congregations have gone



to such an extreme as to silence the worshipers and reduce them to passivity. The Union Prayer Book has been exceedingly helpful, because of its responsive readings and of the portions assigned for audible reading by the congregation, in enabling the people to participate in the services.

Singing by the congregation has also been promoted by the Union Hymnal. The children are trained in the school and then naturally lead in singing at the services. Groups of young men and women forming choral societies become acquainted with the Jewish hymnology. With their aid the congregation falls into the habit of singing as a matter of course. It may take several years to train your people but it can be done. One of the most delightful outcomes of this effort in my congregation was the institution, some years ago, of a boy choir. They sing at every service all the year round, and are trained for choral work with the regular choir. It is wonderful, on a Yom Kippur afternoon, when the boys cluster around the pulpit, to hear them sing the quaint and touching music of the ritual. How the languid congregation revives! What joy is in their countenances! Our young men and women have their Junior Choir which serves at the special services conducted by our Junior Congregation. These are some of the practical things we have found of value in restoring active participation on the part of the people in public worship.

**Q.** Should laymen lead the worship?

**A.** The part of the individual in the service is one of the strong points of the Orthodox Synagogue, and in my judgment, it was a great mistake to omit it entirely in

the Reform. While there were abuses connected with the calling up of individuals to read from the Torah, the individuals felt the responsibility. It was a direct appeal to them. To some extent we are restoring it in our congregation. Every Sabbath we invite some member to read from the Haftarah. On every Yom Kippur afternoon we have a number of men read fine selections from Jewish writings, including those provided in the Prayer Book. Also, as I have cited to you, we have the young boys and girls volunteer to learn to read the lesson from the Torah on certain occasions. This has stimulated interest in Hebrew. When people have a share in the ceremony, worship is not a mere matter of proxy—a performance by the rabbi alone. Attendance at Synagogue becomes a responsibility and the whole service takes on a renewed vitality.

Q. If a model sermon should be limited to the development of only one idea, what is the proper length of such a sermon?

A. The proper length of a sermon depends upon a number of adventitious circumstances. In fact, any sermon is made by the circumstances as much as by the minister. I have preached a sermon under certain circumstances and become speedily aware that it evoked an unquestionable response of deep intensity. I have delivered that same sermon on another occasion and it has fallen flat. The same ideas and illustrations were used. What was the reason? I have often asked that question, and my observation has led me to conclude that the reason lay in the fact that sermons are created by the attendant circumstances and con-

ditions as much as they are by the speaker. For instance, you are invited to take part in the dedication of a synagogue or the installation of one of your colleagues. The atmosphere is tense with expectancy. People have been keyed up for the event weeks ahead. Your function, then, is merely to find the form of expression that will most fully give voice to what is already in existence in the minds and hearts of the people. Think not of yourself but of your hearers.

Let me admonish you against a sin which most of our rabbis and other public speakers commit. When a program has been arranged and you have been asked to speak for fifteen or twenty minutes, do not commit the error of speaking thirty or forty minutes. You will ruin the whole program if you do. I have seen the joy of many a festival marred by the thoughtlessness of men who forgot that the occasion was to be shared with others. If you talk at the rate of one hundred words a minute and you speak for twenty minutes, do not exceed fifteen hundred words. Allow the other five minutes for some deliberateness and effectiveness in delivery. If you are asked to officiate at a marriage you have an opportunity to voice a sentiment that already exists and to deepen the spiritual impress of the critical moment that binds two lives together in the most sacred of earthly covenants. It is not necessary for you to engage in the cheap occupation of harassing your hearers and stirring up conflicting emotions in the hearts of the parents who, perhaps, are sending away their only child. So at a funeral the fountains of sorrow are open and overflow with tears. You are not

to tear out people's hearts by agonizing them still further. This is not your vocation. You are to be the comforter, the helper, the one who gives the fortitude religion inspires. I do not deliver eulogies. I strive to express in carefully considered prayer what the moment is to teach. I feel that these are golden moments and we destroy their value and turn the gold into dross by multiplying words.

**Q.** Why is it that, when a rabbi knows the auditors are bored by a too lengthy discourse, he will continue to protract the sermon to forty minutes or more even when the congregation is paying little or no attention? Do you not think a short, vigorous sermon of fifteen minutes preferable to a loquacious, wearisome, long-drawn-out sermon, when the rabbi is really playing for time? Do you not think that a forty minute sermon cheapens the sermon and makes it and the congregation's response to it mechanical? Cannot the protractedness of the sermon be reduced to a minimum and the service be beautified and rendered more appealing?

**A.** This is a splendid illustration of prolixity, of how not to ask a question or preach a sermon. The only reason for drawing out a fifteen minute discourse to forty minutes is unpreparedness. I have tried to emphasize with all my power in what I read to you that, whether your discourse be written out in detail and memorized or only from mental notes, the sermon must be prepared. The rabbi who rambles along for forty or fifty minutes demonstrates that he has not boiled down his discourse, i. e. eliminated the processes and offered the results of his studies. But even with the fullest

preparation it takes an extraordinary preacher, one of rare magnetism, to hold a gathering of people of varied mental training for much longer than thirty minutes. I preach with my watch in front of me and when I find I am beginning to transgress, I close my discourse and save the rest for another time. When I see that my congregation is beginning to grow lax, I realize that I have lost my grip on them. This is the minute I must be able to halt or to throw in some striking illustration or fact that will arrest their attention so that they must listen. This is one of the advantages of not being tied down to a set form of memorized words. But it is also attended by a grave danger to be guarded against. I refer to the habit of some glib-tongued speakers who lower the standards of the pulpit by indulging in colloquial or even slang expressions.

Q. What is your opinion of a rabbi using New Testament texts?

A. I think that it would be an unnecessary demonstration of the rabbi's poverty of thought. Without depreciating its excellencies, the New Testament is, after all, an exceedingly limited field of literature. We have in the so-called Old Testament and in all the vast post-biblical literature that has sprung therefrom sources and texts which you would never be able to exhaust even if you were to live as long as Methusaleh. However, the purpose of a text is to give to a sermon the dignity and force which come from the fact that it is based on what the hearers recognize as an authoritative precept. Where the New Testament, has avowedly repudiated Judaism, it is devoid of authoritative appeal



to the Jewish mind. Its fine parables and texts, it is well known, are found largely paralleled in Jewish teachings. It is manifestly best for us to quote the Jewish sources.

**Q.** Has a rabbi a right to preach ideas which have found little acceptance in Jewish thought. Must he accept all the beliefs which are currently thought to be Jewish?

**A.** Judaism has, throughout the ages, been notable for its rare hospitality to alien thought. "The tent of Father Abraham was open on all sides," was the characteristic observation of our sages. Synagogues were wont to be built with windows open to all four cardinal points that the light might stream in. The Bible welcomes the lore of Chaldea, Egypt, and Babylon. The Apocrypha is steeped in the wisdom of the Greeks. Maimonides ponders over the philosophy of Aristotle, and Mendelssohn is the modern Plato. We in our turn live, move, and have our being in the intellectual atmosphere of the age of science, and rejoice in the air of freedom we breathe.

Note, then, that this freedom to share all thoughts and drink at the fountains of every inspiration has nourished the mental and spiritual life of Israel. Indeed, to this, many think, we owe our continued existence and growth despite the hostile conditions that so often harassed us. Note also, that it was the distinctive quality of the Jewish genius that, while sharing in the thought-life, and civilization of all peoples, it exercised a keen and discerning judgment, casting off and rejecting the false and contradictory and absorbing and

assimilating that which it found to be true. Whatever new truth it learned it recast and impressed with the stamp of the Jewish mould and form of expression. Witness the superiority of the biblical over the Babylonian myths of the early chapters of Genesis, the just and humane spirit of the Mosaic code over that of the code of Hammurabi. Thus it rejected many ancient books, denied them a place in the Canon, and found neither the New Testament nor the Koran, neither Kabbalah nor "Science and Health," conformable with its basic point of view. This, then, is my answer: Nothing in the realm of thought is to be denied to you, but weigh and measure all by the eternal standards which Jewish judgment has apprehended and the Jewish spirit approved.

Q. Do you consider the presentation of biblical criticism in sermons a precarious procedure?

A. I certainly do. Place yourself, in imagination, in your pulpit, ready for your discourse. You are facing your congregation which is made up of all kinds of minds,—of all degrees of preparation and lack of preparation, from the little child to the college graduate. You realize that you cannot talk biblical criticism profitably to this sort of a gathering. All people are not trained to concentrate on such abstract subjects as religion. Moreover, if you bring in a scientific discussion of any kind, you turn your pulpit into a platform. The pulpit is not a lecture platform nor a chair of theology. The Bible should be treated in the pulpit for homilectic purposes. From it we are to draw that direct and vital message of life, duty, conduct, and

character to which the pulpit is definitely consecrated. When the time comes for you to teach biblical criticism—and I say *teach*, not *preach*—you can get a group of people together, people who are interested in the subject, and you will find a ready response. You will be treating this theme in the right and not the wrong place.

Q. It is obviously unwise to teach biblical criticism from the pulpit, but may we not draw illustration from the Bible, from the standpoint of the results of biblical criticism; for instance, speak of the time when we were a nomadic, tribal people worshipping a mountain deity?

A. Certainly. I do not mean to imply that you are to ignore the fact that there was a “second Isaiah” or that you are to be blind to the truths revealed by the monuments and the comparative study of religions. What I mean is this: do nothing in your pulpit that would tend to weaken the reverential spirit. Do what you can to build it up. Reverence is a delicate flower, and it takes but a slight breath of the chill wind of criticism to blight it. Therefore be exceedingly cautious as to how you use biblical criticism. Always keep in mind that your tools are to serve constructive ends. Do what you can to build up religious life. In this sense I mean to warn you against abusing the pulpit.

Q. What is your opinion of a layman preaching from the pulpit?

A. There are times when a layman may deliver a message from the pulpit which will be of more effect and power than if the rabbi delivers it. However, we have no such distinction among us. The priesthood has gone and the rabbi is only a layman elevated to

a place of leadership by reason of the fact that he has endeavored to qualify himself for the position through special study and training. A layman who has specialized, e. g. on Jewish charity, Jewish law, etc. may know more about these subjects than a Rabbi possibly may know. There are occasions when a congregation may well hear the message of such a one. An added significance is imparted to such an event because a minister cannot, in the minds of some, be disassociated from the fact that he is a member of a profession and his opinion, as they think, is likely to be touched with a professional bias, whereas your layman is unhampered by such a prejudgment. You can see how the religious interpretation of some message by a layman of authority on philanthropic, civic, educational, or other vital problem may prove most valuable on certain occasions.

Q. What can a rabbi do who finds preaching irksome?

A. Let him try it a little longer and perhaps he may get over the feeling. But if, as time goes on, the rabbi finds that preaching is not his vocation, let him not make the mistake of forcing himself upon the congregation and forcing himself to abide in a vocation for which he is convinced he is not fitted. I call your attention to the fact that we are living in a period and in a country where opportunities in the ministry are broadening. Time was when the only successful rabbi was the man who could draw a crowd and hold them enrapt by his eloquence. Many congregations are learning to appreciate plain, straightforward, manly messages given by the man who feels what he says and means it, even

though he have not great magnetism or superior powers of expression.

**Q.** What are some of the other avenues in which a rabbi may be of service?

**A.** The profession of teaching is always open to the man of scholarly tastes and habits. Journalism provides a growing source of opportunity for men of our training. We need rabbis to travel about the country as Field Secretaries. We have a great and largely unorganized mass of some three million Jews in the United States. All the National Associations need men who have the necessary knowledge and, above all, the necessary zeal and consecration, to meet all kinds and conditions of people under all sorts of circumstances, and rouse in them the enthusiasm which will result in promoting educational and religious life among the Jews.

We have Jewish farmers in increasing numbers. They are living in isolated places and are unable to provide proper Jewish training for their children. This is an important field. The Jewish Chautauqua Society sent a rabbi to serve the farmers of North Dakota and for a number of years has kept a young man working among the Jewish farm colonies in southern New Jersey. He goes from colony to colony, teaching the children in the afternoons, leading the young men and women in the evenings, and gathering them together in clubs for all sorts of study and social activity.

The new profession of "social worker" affords expanding opportunities. Some men find they are not fitted to serve a congregation at large because they are not able to handle men and because they lack patience, the insight and the adaptability to changing conditions



arising in the life of a community. What shall such a man do who has spent years to secure his education and training for the ministry? Let him go where he need not deal with the world at large, but where he has a sheltered congregation, a group of children or young men and women in some Jewish institution. To work among them, relieved from those often difficult and vexatious conditions with which he is unable to cope, will afford to him a ministry than which none can be richer in blessing. Chaplaincies in the Army and Navy provide new and inspiring fields of service.

Q. Would you make use of jokes in a sermon?

A. A sermon is a serious message. A joke is not a joke when it is taken seriously. There can be little fitness to joking in the pulpit and the men who cheapen their pulpit discourses for the mere sport of raising a laugh are really considered by the people as clowns and exercise no genuine or lasting influence.

Distinguish, however, between mere jokes and humor. There are some forms of humor that may enhance, enliven, and ennoble a sermon. A classic example is that sermon of Isaiah in which he sarcastically pictured the idol-maker at his task. Another illustration is the irony of Elijah when he mocked the prophets of Baal.

There are few men who may venture to handle this edged tool, for its keen blade is likely to slip and cause disastrous injury. Happy the man who can handle with skill and success the deft contrasts by which tears are dispelled through the sunshine of laughter, the hollowness of sham turned to shame, the truth vindicated, and the difficult leap made from the plane of the ridiculous to the summits of the sublime.

## IV

### ETHICAL PROBLEMS OF THE RABBI

Perhaps the most eloquent tribute ever paid to the supreme genius of our prophets was the one penned by that most profound thinker and erudite scholar, James Darmesteter. In his book, "The Religion of the Future," he makes this statement: "In turning towards these men, humanity is not retrogressing twenty-six centuries; it is they who were twenty-six centuries in advance. Humanity was too young to read them. But they could wait without fear, sure of the eternity of their creed, and sure that humanity in its march towards the future would be forced to retrace its steps to the mountain and pass back from Golgotha to Zion.

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"The spirit of the prophets is in the modern soul. They loved everything that we love, and neither reason nor conscience has lost anything through their ideal. They have enthroned a God who wishes neither altars nor holocausts, nor canticles, but that 'right shall gush forth as water, and justice as a never-failing stream.' Righteousness was to them an active force; the idea was converted into a fact before which all other facts pale. By virtue of believing in justice they advanced it to the rank of a factor in history. They had a cry of pity for the unhappy, of vengeance for the oppressor, of peace

and unity for all mankind. They did not say to man, 'This world is worthless.' They said to him, 'This world is good, and thou too be good, be just, be pure.' They said to the wealthy, 'Thou shalt not withhold the laborer's hire'; to the judge, 'Thou shalt strike without humiliating'; to the wise man, 'Thou art responsible for the soul of the people.' And they taught many to live and to die for the right without the hope of Elysian fields. They taught people that without ideals 'the future hangs before them in tatters,' that the ideal alone is the aim of life, and that it consists, not in the glory of the conqueror, not in riches, nor in power, but in holding up as a torch to the nations the example of better laws and of a higher soul. And lastly, they spread over the future, above the storms of the present, the rainbow of a vast hope, a radiant vision of a better humanity, more exempt from evil and death, which shall no longer know war or unrighteous judges, where divine science will fill the earth, as the waters cover the bed of the ocean."

To us, as preachers of modern Judaism, is entrusted this glorious program than which none loftier has been conceived by any of the religious geniuses of the whole human family. To share in the privilege of proclaiming the simple but exalted concepts of such a religion must send a thrill of pride, of joy, and of honor into the soul of every man who is permitted to stand in the pulpit.

Let us not forget that "though Moses towers on the mountain he does not fail to descend to the people." It is in the effort to bring down the lofty messages of our religion to their practical application in the life of the

people that those ethical problems arise which it is incumbent upon every rabbi to solve to the inner satisfaction of his own conscience.

The first of these problems has to do with one's intellectual honesty. How far, e. g., may you, a modern man, function with an ancient or medieval ritual? We retain in a measure the symbolism and ceremonials expressive of the yearnings and aspirations of other generations. Hebrew is retained in our worship and the English used is largely archaic. Agricultural festivals and historical holidays whose original meaning and appeal have long since largely faded from among us still persist. The hopes, the ideals, and the convictions that belong to our age are often denied free expression. Can you hope to draw men near to the divine with these strange and obsolete elements? Is not God defamed rather than glorified when one ministers at the altar with offerings which have lost their force and their truth. To set the ritual higher than rectitude was the cardinal sin against which the ethical monotheism of the prophets so fiercely contended.

Again, there are modern preachers ready to espouse all sorts of vagaries. If such arise less frequently among the Jews than elsewhere, there is a reason. It is because of the conviction expressed in the dictum, **חכם עדיף מנביא** "The sage is greater than the prophet."—(*B. B. 12*). This sentiment found general acceptance in Israel. The age of prophecy yielded to the age of scholarship. This fact argues not retrogression but progression. The consecration of the priest and the inspiration of the prophet alike must pass under

the intellectual judgment of a clarified wisdom. Without reason worship degenerates into the quackery of a mystifying mummer. Inspirational speech without intellectual poise becomes fanatical ranting. Our practical age is insistent in its demand for an intelligent, scholarly ministry. The man in the pulpit must speak with the authority of superior knowledge and ripened judgment.

Here, then, arise other and most important problems of ethics for the ministry. Scholarship in the ministry has had its abuses also. The stream of learning in many generations ran out into the barren sands of scholasticism. Such were the dry pilpulistic discussions of the Talmud and the casuistry of the Fathers of the Church. The mental agility they developed was sometimes at the cost of blunting the finer spiritual sensibilities and often entailed a willful neglect of the vital realities of the moral life of mankind. The scholarship of our day is so varied and concerned with such large and serious themes that it does not so readily lose itself in vapid speculation. The demand for a learned ministry, however, opens up other temptations. The necessity of preaching week after week and giving other public addresses innumerable, subjects the minister to the temptation of assuming the scholarly pose, to impress the public with the versatility and the profundity of his knowledge of all and the most varied subjects, such as only specialists or a man of rarest mental grasp can attain.

Obliged by the exactions of his many functions often to relinquish original researches of his own, the modern minister in a large community must perforce be satisfied



to reap the results of the investigations of others. With a mind thus open to all truth, the man who grows intellectually is sure to find his views undergoing great, often radical, changes. What is he to do? Shall he cherish one set of views in his study and expound another set in his pulpit? Shall he carry the people to whom he ministers through all his mental struggles and spiritual wrestlings? Must he, by the cold blasts of criticism, lay waste the tender blossoms of religion in the minds and hearts of others? In brief, can a man evade these dangers and yet be intellectually honest in the modern ministry?

The ethical questions I have raised demand unequivocal replies. The modes and forms of our worship have never been static. From primitive patriarchal times to the present, they have a continuous history of unfoldment. The Tabernacle and Temple with their sacrificial systems yielded to the Synagogue with its ritual of prayer. Permanent elements were evolved. The outpourings of the Psalmists have become the world's manual of prayers and hymns. Though archaic, their language is classic and unexcelled. We moderns need to hold fast to their sublime and poetic charm, to guard against the invasions of the commonplace into the language of the sanctuary. The use of Hebrew has already been discussed.

Agricultural festivals and historic institutions have come to us out of conditions long since changed. Yet permanent spiritual values have become associated with Passover, Tabernacles and the other Feasts, whose influences have invested the Jewish home, the Synagogue and the lives of the people with a charm and dignity we dare not lose.

Never must the ritual be aught but a means to the ends of devotion. It has been the chief motive of the Reform movement to find the true expression for the soul-life of our own generation, without rending the bonds of reverent traditions. Therefore, the Rabbis of our Conference have felt impelled, from time to time, to modify and alter the prayer book in the interest of intellectual honesty.

Not alone may a man be intellectually honest in the modern ministry, he must be so, and nothing else. There is no mask so transparent as that of a hypocrite. The mere suspicion of dishonesty is fatal to that confidence of the people without which no real ministry can exist. The man who strives to be transparently honest in his convictions has never yet injured religion, but has always strengthened it. Every synagogue true to our best traditions is a "Free Synagogue." An attitude of fearless candor constrains the respect of enemies no less than of friends. This attitude should be; towards things settled and true, e. g., the inviolability of the moral law, one of immovable orthodoxy; towards what is unknown and open to question, e. g., psychical researches, it should be one of judicial, reverential consideration; towards things disproved and obsolete, e. g., superstitions, it should be radical to the literal extent of uprooting. Such has been the attitude of our "men of light and leading."

It is possible to maintain the utmost intellectual honesty in the modern pulpit while living up to the educational ideal of the ministry. The pulpit is not a chair of philosophy, nor of scientific criticism, nor of

economics and sociology, but it is the place where the truths which they may reveal are to be transmuted into food for the hunger of the mind and drink for the thirst of the spirit. The true sage follows Isaiah's dictum in imparting religious knowledge. "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little."—(*Isaiah 28:13*).

As we ourselves grow intellectually by slow processes to maturity, so must we give others the time to grow. We give milk to babes and meat to men. This great principle of modern pedagogy applied to the teaching of religion in the school and in the pulpit will safeguard every honest sentiment while it deepens and conserves the truth.

If, over against the false, we set the true sage in seeking the right ethical standards of a teaching ministry, so too must we set the true against the false prophets in working out our ideal of a preaching ministry. Intellectual honesty and moral honesty must go hand in hand. Blessed is that minister to whom is given the divine, prophetic gift of eloquence, thereby to draw men near to the inspirations of holiness, to rouse their better natures until they are impelled to deeds that glorify their Maker. This is not done by mere words. The power of the prophet was in his personality. He spake with the voice of conviction to the startled conscience. The inner secret of the inspirational minister is not in his rhetoric but in his sincerity. Like the true prophet of old he must be the custodian of the standards of the higher ethics. The judge is the embodied conscience of the community. He stands for justice.

The minister is the embodied character of the community, standing for righteousness. The law itself concedes to the minister this higher rank in according to him the functions that sanctify birth, marriage, and death, thus to lift these great human crises out of the plane of the secular and to exalt the mysteries of life, duty, and destiny by enshrining them in the idealism of religion. Through them the minister is enabled to bring the moral inspirations directly into the homes and hearts of the people as no other man is privileged to do. He shares personally in the education and training of youth, helps to mould character, to guide conduct, and to determine the careers of men, women, and children. The judge sits in state awaiting the appeals of the wronged for justice. The minister carries to the people the higher law of righteousness, the inviolable and unimpeachable standards of ethics. Whatever the emergency, whatever the temptation, whatever the calamity, his stand must be above all personalities and partisanship, free from all self-seeking, to serve as guardian of the prophetic ideal and to seek to make the eternal standards of morality the supreme directing force every day, for every man, in every home, school, factory, office, and shop, as well as in every sanctuary. This is what we are endeavoring to do in a practical way in the modern pulpit.

In the struggle to achieve clarity of view and firmness of conviction, to attain to that inner harmony of thought and feeling which establishes poise and stability in what you preach and teach, you are indeed blessed if you have an intimate friend and companion capable of

sharing your thought sympathetically, yet critically. Here I may be permitted to make reference to the glimpses I have had during these thirty-five years past into the most intimate phase of the rabbinical career, i. e., into the home life of rabbis. No confidant, no intellectual comrade more unselfish or more devoted to his real well-being can a minister find than the woman who consents to be his wife. Concerning this exceedingly personal and vital matter, Dr. Singer spoke to the students at "Jew's College," in an address, to which I have previously referred, in such terms that I am sure it will be helpful to you to consider his words. In this most excellent address, entitled "Where the Clergy Fail," Dr. Singer states: "One matter there is upon which turns far oftener than is suspected the success or failure of a clergyman's career. It is a matter which, I believe, is not dealt with in the usual treatises on pastoral theology and about which, I am sure—though I have not made particular inquiries upon the subject—nothing is taught in the curriculum of the students of this institution. I refer to the minister's choice of a wife. Everybody has heard the old rabbinic adages about 'Ezer' and 'Kenegdo,' that according to a man's deserts or lack of deserts so is his wife a help or a hindrance to him; and about 'Matsa' and 'Motsa,' that 'a woman makes or mars her husband.' True enough in their general application, with no class of the community are they more true than with the clergy. Since in the Jewish pastorate celibacy is not regarded as a qualification, importance attaches to the shepherdess as well as to the shepherd. In how many ways can she



directly or indirectly help forward her husband's work and contribute to the welfare and progress of his flock! In the social sphere, failure in which may seriously cripple a clergyman's usefulness, who does not know that she is the predominant partner? If she is sensible enough not to consider the whole world in league against her husband because people do not fall down and worship him, how often may she save him, too, from making a fool of himself! Few clergymen who have been fortunate enough to make even a modest success of their careers will hesitate to acknowledge to what human co-operation that success has been in great measure due."

Permit me to add to this testimony the observation that the lonely minister who is obliged to live about in hotels and boarding houses is at a distinct disadvantage. The whole tone of his ministry is enhanced and the attitude of his people lifted to a superior plane when he establishes in their midst a home of his own. It then becomes possible for you not merely to receive but also to bestow the blessings of hospitality. You and yours become an integral part of the people's life. As you go to them in their joys and sorrows, so in turn will they be enabled to bring to you and yours the moral support you will need. That personal bond which I have emphasized as so vital to the effective work of the rabbi you will thus be able to create, and it will be deepened and strengthened as by no other means. We do not believe in the so-called pastoral duties of the rabbi in the sense of going about to exhort and to pray. But we do believe a rabbi should know the people in

their homes as they should know him in his. He will thus learn from the book of life what no college curriculum can teach. His sermons will have a real meaning to those who listen to him, if from personal knowledge he has an insight into the conditions of their daily interests and pursuits. Moreover, a live congregation must seek to enlist every man, woman and child in some phase of its activities. The rabbi must seek to realize the practical dictum "from each according to his capacity, to each according to his need." Such co-operation is immeasurably furthered by the hand of welcome cordially extended to rich and poor alike at the threshold of your own home.

A colleague tells me that his practice of having two of his confirmants at his own table for Kiddush each week has led to the restoration of that beautiful religious rite in the homes of his people. Similarly have Seder and Hanukkah been reinstituted. To preach of the charm of the Jewish home is well, to illustrate it by personal example is better. I am dilating on what may seem minor matters, because I wish to emphasize again the personal basis of the relationship of rabbi and people.

There are a number of practical ethical problems of vital importance which have to do with the rabbi in his relation to his co-workers. It has always seemed to me an anomalous condition that the rabbi, whose thought and effort is, or should be, devoted day and night to promoting the welfare of the congregation he serves, should be excluded from its councils. I have found that officers and directors, when made to understand this condition, eagerly welcome the presence of

their rabbi at the sessions and gladly accord him his rightful place at the congregational meetings. I am an honorary member of the Board of Directors, of the School Board, of the Committee on Divine Service and of various other committees of my congregation. This has enabled me to be present and to confer on all matters that involve the religious stand of the congregation and on everything pertaining to its educational and moral endeavors. The lack of such opportunity for frank and friendly consideration of the many issues that arise is largely responsible for the friction which often kindles the blaze of most unethical contentions. Whenever disagreements arise distinguish rigidly between measures and men, between principles and personalities, that bitterness may be avoided. Do not err in holding him to be a personal foe who avows a different conviction.

There are difficult and delicate situations involving high ethical standards with reference to your contract with a congregation, your salary, your vacation, and other privileges and responsibilities. I know a minister who was dismissed because he failed to pay his debts, and the bills of the butcher, the baker, and his wife's dressmaker came in, to the embarrassment of the Board of Directors. The ethical standards of a rabbi are presumed to be as lofty, at least, as those which prevail in every other vocation. When this proves to be otherwise there is certainly no room for him in the ministry and our profession should be relieved of the delinquent.

There is nothing to be gained by ignoring or blinking at the fact that there have been and are, unfortunately, instances of disagreements, misunderstandings, and maladjustments between rabbis and congregations, to rectify which we need an active and competent agency. The present status is almost one of chaos.

Rabbis are, unfortunately, placed or misplaced. Congregations are dissatisfied, whether justly or unjustly, and find themselves helpless because of the proverbial Jewish *Rachmonoth*, which will weakly endure in long-suffering patience the neglect or lowering of the religious life of a community rather than dispose of an incompetent and unsatisfactory incumbent in the pulpit.

There is nothing to be gained by ignoring or blinking at the fact that there are and have been men in the pulpit who have been left to contend single-handed with the abuse of power on the part of congregational leaders and boards; men who have desired to make pulpit transfers because of petty annoyances which sensitive spirits resent; men who, because of health or climatic conditions, have found it imperative to change but lacked initiative or experience and suffered because of their helplessness. Again there are, today, men who are misplaced by reason of a lack of adaptation to their duties. Yet, there is no agency which endeavors to find the right man for the right place. As a consequence there is a continuous waste, economically, physically, and spiritually. Worst of all is the resultant welter of unseemly rivalries. Animosities are engendered between colleagues, the whole standard of the profession lowered,

its influence weakened, and its authority impugned. These unfortunate conditions make an attempt to find a remedy imperative. We dare not permit the present *laissez faire* policy to continue. Our self-respect demands some action in this matter. A proposition which I, as chairman of a committee, prepared and offered to the Central Conference of American Rabbis at its session of 1916, in an effort to find a practical solution, failed of adoption. The plan contemplated a Bureau of Registration and filling of pulpit vacancies. It was hoped to extend to the whole rabbinate the excellent system of registration and of record keeping employed at the Hebrew Union College. On a single card is presented the whole history and record of each student from the day of his matriculation to his graduation. The faculty itself acts as a helpful bureau, serving both its graduates and the congregations, who naturally turn to it for men to supply their vacant pulpits.

Perhaps, some day, the Conference will find courage to entrust to a committee of its members functions similar to those now exercised with wisdom and discretion by the faculty of the College, so that the whole rabbinate may be served. That day may be hastened by you, young gentlemen, when you pass out of the College and assume your place in the ranks, if each one of you will rigidly discountenance every method of filling pulpits except the one which one of my colleagues denominates "the method of the right of way," that is, the method by which a congregation selects a man, not on a mere trial sermon or two, but on his record and his credentials supplemented by the sending of a committee to



hear him and know him personally. Where, because of distance or because the man is too young and altogether untried, this is not feasible and the trial sermon is the only recourse, then only one man should be called and he should have "the right of way," that is, he should be the only man under immediate consideration until action be taken. If he be rejected, then the way should be open to the next available man. If you will insist upon such a fair test of merit you will help to uphold the highest ethical standards of the ministry and reveal your real attitude towards the high calling you have chosen.

There is, finally, an ethical problem of transcendent importance to which you will be obliged to give consideration. It has reference to your service to the larger congregation beyond the sanctuary of Israel which you must serve—your community, your city or town, your state and country. In these days, the call of patriotism rings with irresistible force in all our hearts and our men are hastening to give answer to the call, in the army, in the navy, in the cantonments, and in manifold fields of civilian service. When the war shall have ended—God hasten the day—still greater opportunities will come with the labor of reconstruction. Then the world will be compelled to hark back to the program of our great prophets. They were no mere idle babblers. Our democratic age responds to their mighty protest against vested wrongs and their courageous championship of the weak and the oppressed. The inspirations that welled from their hearts and rolled in thundrous messages from their lips have a resistless power to move

the ministers of all denominations today because of the wonderfully modern note sounded by those most unique and extraordinary geniuses of history. The effort to emulate the ancient prophets herein, however, involves at once a series of profound ethical difficulties.

There were of old also false prophets who spoke for hire, like those whom Amaziah, the priest of Beth El, denounced to Amos; professional prophets who curried favor with kings and princes, like Zedekiah, who trained his prophecies to flatter King Ahab; visionaries like those whom Jeremiah castigated with scorn and who, in the deceit of their hearts, misled their trusting followers.

There are many people today who speak of a "hireling ministry." The old prophets were men under no trammels of institutionalism. Some of their modern successors seem to be so enmeshed as to be concerned mainly with efforts to secure increased salaries; they covet fees and gratuities like any waiter; engage in unseemly rivalries for securing honors and promotions; and commercialize the very sanctuaries by setting them in competition with each other. Laboring people, we are told, ignore the Church because the clergy are mere retainers of the capitalists and trim their words accordingly.

The effort to create hostility and class feeling between capital and labor can be best counteracted by the ministers. They are allied with the workers as earners of salaries; they are allied with the captains of industry as administrators of affairs. Therefore, in the great industrial warfare now being waged, a supreme oppor-

tunity rests with the ministry. Inasmuch as "nothing is settled until it is settled right," ultimately every dispute must be referred to the arbitrament of that higher law of which the ministry is the recognized champion and guardian.

At the beginning of these discourses your attention was directed to the fact that the title rabbi vested you with the prerogatives of leadership. In the degree in which you achieve leadership among your own people may you further the leadership of Israel in the supreme task to which we have been set among the families of the earth, to bless mankind by hastening the realization of the prophetic vision of the moral and social regeneration of the world.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q.** You say a preacher should preach only from the store of his sincerest convictions. With so many divergent views on vital questions, religious, social, and political, would this not make for both abuse of the pulpit and confusion in the minds of Jews at large concerning the solution of the problem so treated?

**A.** I cannot see why. The world will always have disputed questions. It would be an unhappy condition of affairs if we should fail to have a Beth Hillel and a Beth Shammai, i. e., opposing schools of thought, in every generation. It is the friction of minds that produces the fire which both illumines and warms. The Talmud says: *מתוך הוויכוח יתברר אמת* "Truth is clarified by discussion." I feel it is the duty of every man to speak his convictions in the pulpit. His conviction of today may indeed be different from that of ten years from today. Let him be but frank enough to admit the change and it will be evidence of the fact that he has not remained stagnant. A man has the right and the duty to advance. I cannot see why it should create confusion if I make an announcement of what I feel to be my honest attitude towards a question. It does not always follow that my hearers will necessarily fall in with my views. They, too, have convictions of their own. The right to cherish one's own convictions is supreme, and in this free country we pride ourselves especially on our democratic freedom of thought and

speech. Though they have been somewhat restricted on account of the war, yet we must conserve and cherish them as our most sacred possessions.

**Q.** You have treated of the rabbi as a minister, as a teacher, and as a preacher. Do you not think that the rabbi should be qualified to be a social worker also?

**A.** Yes. The rabbi who is faithful to his vocation as a teacher and as a preacher will find himself coming into contact more and more with the concerns of everyday life and under the necessity of expounding the moral issues that arise. No man in these times can stand apart. He must respond to the outcries for justice and to the efforts to improve social conditions.

Our college recognized the need for preparing the rabbi for an intelligent participation in philanthropic and social movements when Dr. Bogen was appointed a regular staff lecturer. The efforts of the Free Synagogue of New York in the field of social service is exercising a notable influence on other congregations and the fellowships offered by it are providing an excellent opportunity for men to qualify for such work.

The sessions of the National Conference on Social Work and of the National Conference of Jewish Charities have afforded an inspiring opportunity to me as to many other rabbis. The growing literature on this subject and the periodicals now issued should be studied by every rabbi. A new profession has come into existence, that of the social worker. A number of our rabbis have found their rabbinical training most helpful in this new field of endeavors.



Q. Would you preach against gambling?

A. With all my heart. However, there are many ways of preaching. Some are vital, some are fatal to the object sought. If, in your community, you find a vice which is growing and its insidious effects are undermining the home life and the character of the individual, it is your sacred duty to take note thereof and let the pulpit be heard from. I said something to you about moral courage. I tried to differentiate between the moral courage of standing firm and fearless in the face of any wrong and that so-called moral courage which is nothing but cheap bravado. There are men in the pulpit eager to be in the limelight every day, men who seek opportunities of every kind to secure glaring headlines in the newspapers. This, as far as my knowledge goes, has never been effective preaching. Let the public know where you stand, but before you go about your plan of eliminating the evil, consult with the people in your community who know something about the thing you are trying to reform and work in conjunction with the men and women who take these matters to heart and who are apt to have a better knowledge than you of how to remedy the evil. No public question comes up but it has a moral aspect. Yet there are few public questions that stand out clearly in their moral bearing. They are bound up with complex situations, often so difficult and trying that it would be most ineffectual for a man to handle them merely from the pulpit. There is no general rule. You must study each case and use your best judgment whatever the cost. You may err in judgment but you may not err in principle.

**Q.** Is the sermon which speaks in generalities to be preferred to the sermon which treats ethical and social problems specifically?

**A.** Never speak in mere generalities. People weary of them. Tell something that has to do with their lives, with the deep concerns that are agitating their minds and hearts. I am asked definitely, "Should a man refer directly to the 'gas bill' which is agitating Cincinnati or to the vice problem in Philadelphia?" I will say again that I do not believe in preaching generalities. It may be quite sufficient for the man in the pulpit, in addressing the people who are aroused by some criticism, to indicate with force and effect what the true moral and religious standards are. There are occasions when it is necessary to refer directly to issues, but I can never quite justify pulpit attacks on individuals.

Let me illustrate. A few years ago, there was a dreadful car strike in Philadelphia. The militia had been called out. The streets were filled with rioters and human blood was spilled and property destroyed. A meeting was hastily called. Ministers representing some twenty-six denominations gathered together. Something had to be done. Action had to be taken to safeguard the life and honor of the community. The ministers sent out a ringing demand to the disputants and took steps to arbitrate between the strikers and the traction company. The mayor of the city was reported to have said in reply to our communication, "Let the ministers mind their own business." Was not this our business? Whose business was it more than ours to exercise a vigorous persuasive influence in behalf of the sanctity of law, order, and peace in critical times?

During the election riots of last year, in which human life was sacrificed and innocent people blackjacked, when we had the dreadful exhibition of gunmen imported from New York, what was more a minister's business than to stand forth with the forces of decency? I was asked if I would offer up a prayer at a great mass meeting of our citizens that was hastily called, and I said, "Yes, I will be at the meeting at once." I felt that a minister, to be a righteous force in his community, must have the courage of his convictions and must demonstrate it, especially in emergencies.

You do not always have a clearly defined moral issue before you, because almost all public questions are bound up with the complexities of political and personal concerns. Hands off all personalities. I do not believe a rabbi should "go on the stump." I do not believe a rabbi should be a politician. I made a comparison in my paper between a rabbi and a judge, and I do not believe a judge should go about electioneering. Chief Justice Hughes resigned his place on the bench when he accepted the presidential nomination. When a judge acts otherwise he undermines his influence and authority in the community.

The minister stands for the embodied character of the community. What a fine force and influence he may be in the lives of the people as individuals! This he endangers when he lowers himself to participate in partisan politics, when he pulls wires and engages in newspaper controversies and kindred activities. Let him hold himself in reserve and speak with authority from the pulpit and in such places where his words will

be effective, far reaching, and conclusive. When things touch you deeply you are bound to preach on them. I preached a sermon on Pesach one year in which I called attention to the sweat-shop system and the evils and abuses of child labor. I talked of unrighteous proceedings with which I was familiar and spoke of them from personal knowledge after investigation. There were men sitting in front of me who had just such conditions as I described prevailing in their factories. I did not mention any names. I simply pictured what existed and compared it with the high moral standards of conduct taught by our religion. A day or two afterwards I received a telephone call from a certain man. "Can you come and see me?" he asked. "Certainly, I'll be down," I replied, and I was in his factory at the stated time. He said, "In your sermon on Passover you spoke about various factories; let me show you our new place." He conducted me through the building, from the roof garden to the emergency hospital. When we returned to the office, he gave me a lecture on preaching sermons about things of which I knew nothing. I listened quietly and then said, "My friend, when I delivered that sermon I had in mind conditions that are still prevailing in the factory on ———Street, from which you moved only a couple of years ago. Because you left that locality and bettered the conditions in your place, because you are beginning to discern the moral issues involved, it does not follow that the whole community has risen to the same plane to which you have attained so recently." I give you this illustration from practical life in order to help clarify the difficult position

of the minister who wants to accomplish something in the community in matters social and political, as well as in religious affairs. Never take a stand on mere hearsay. Be careful that you know of what you speak.

**Q.** To what extent may a preacher inject into his sermons his personal politico-economic faith?

**A.** I would say emphatically, to the extent of his honest conviction. He can never afford to say in his pulpit anything in contradiction to his inmost belief. But a man is not to talk merely for the sake of talking. He must be prompted by the earnest desire to achieve some good, to right some wrong. The question he must ask himself before speaking is: "Will I accomplish anything by it?" To throw out all sorts of theories, propositions, and hypotheses will result in nothing but confusion to the hearers. I gave you in my paper a standard by which to guide your judgment and which, I trust, you will be able to realize. It is this: concerning the things proven to be true, uncompromising orthodoxy; concerning the questions open to doubt and subject to research and investigation, the reverential, judicial attitude; concerning things which have been disproven and are untenable, an attitude radical to the root. I can speak to my congregation frankly and fearlessly, though I know that my views are unpopular and though I face dissent, provided that at all times I have a due sense of my responsibilities as a minister, and provided that my utterances be free from rancor. Let us work with affirmations which will help build the spiritual life.

**Q.** Can a rabbi make really effective investigations into factory conditions on the basis of which he may preach?



A. No, but he may accept the research work of specialists who bring before him conditions revealed under sworn testimony and who carry him to the places where he can see for himself the conditions that prevail and that cry to the heavens for redress. Therefore I said to you, "Never talk on a subject until you are sure of your ground." When newspapers call you up—and they will call you up in the middle of the night perhaps—do not answer unless you are well posted on the subject. Hold your judgment in reserve until you have a just basis on which to form it.

Q. To what extent should the rabbi in his private capacity ally himself with movements that claim to be practical applications of prophetic teaching?

A. What our prophets taught is summarized in Micha's "Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God."—(*Micah* 6:8). Every organization of any kind that is endeavoring to fulfill these great precepts has a claim on the rabbi. You will not have been in your pulpit very long before you will be invited to attend meetings of all kinds. You will be expected to take an interest in the orphan asylum, hospital, relief societies, and in all manner of civic, social, and educational agencies at work in the endeavor to carry out the program of social advancement for the people, a program which was first proclaimed by our prophets and which is becoming the passion of our age. Certainly you cannot deny yourself a part in these efforts and you should eagerly take advantage of every opportunity to carry your teachings in the pulpit into effect.

**Q.** The Reform Temple has been called the "rich man's church." If the accusation is true, what can be done to enable Reform to reach the masses so that all who will may come and pray?

**A.** A very good question and a very hard one. I have been thinking of this question for years and working on its solution. Abolish in your congregation every barrier that keeps a man out. If the old method still prevails which demands as a preliminary to membership the payment of an initiation fee, have it abolished. Do not make access to religion difficult or put a financial barrier in the way. Nothing has justified the charge that the church is the rich man's privilege so much as has the pew system, under which the members are seated in first, second, third, or fourth class seats, according to their commercial rating. We must obliterate the outside social and financial differences that prevail and remember that, however much or however little each man may be able to pay, he counts for as much or as little in the House of God as the other. I believe in the plan of unassigned seats, each person to make a free-will offering according to his means. The Federation of Charities succeeds in securing its funds by this means. Should the synagogue fail? My congregation has free seats for visitors.

Formerly, we had groups of people on the High Holidays gathered around the synagogue seeking access to the free seats, and it was necessary to have a policeman to keep them in line. I spoke to my people again and again about this state of affairs. Each member declared, "I pay my dues. I am interested in the

congregation not only on the High Holidays but throughout the year, and when I want to go to a service I am entitled to my seat. Why should I make way for a man who doesn't contribute?" Of course, he was in the right. But this still left the poor man on the outside and provided no mode for reaching and winning the unaffiliated. After some thought, I came to the conclusion that it was a poor business policy to have a school-house idle. I therefore gathered a group of young men and women and said to them: "We will organize an adjunct service and notify the people who cannot find a place in the synagogue. We will let them know they are all free and equal. There shall be no first and second class, but all shall be one class and first come first served."

Gentlemen, will you believe it? We are now in our sixth year and perhaps a thousand people attend these adjunct services on Yom Kippur. Services are conducted by our young men trained by the rabbis for this purpose, young men who have continued their Hebrew studies and can read the prayers and the lesson from the Torah. We have a choir of young men and women who undertake to learn the difficult music of the holiday service. While I am preaching in the synagogue my associate is preaching in the other place and we take turns. We are gradually bringing these unaffiliated people into the congregation and making members of them. They will soon be able to abolish the old class system.

I say, do everything to break down the barrier created between the rich and the poor. Make it possible for

the man who works on Saturday to enter the synagogue on Friday evening and be welcome. But neither the Friday, nor the Saturday, nor the Sunday morning service in the synagogue has begun to solve the problem of the synagogue and the working man. While we are doing what we can along these lines, there is a rich field waiting for your fresh young minds and energies and you might well dedicate yourselves to its cultivation.

**Q.** What would be your attitude in the case of a family desiring to become members of your congregation but too poor to pay the minimum dues.

**A.** Instances of this kind commonly present themselves at the opening of the school year. The necessity of providing for the religious instruction of their children impels parents to bring their children for registration. No child is refused admission as long as the school facilities permit. When the registration card shows that the parents are not members, the matter is at once referred to the chairman of the school board, who makes it his duty to be at hand on registration days. He has an earnest conference with the parent, pointing out the expense assumed by the congregation in the education of the child or children, acquainting him with his duty and asking him to make a sacrifice for this purpose if he can afford it. When the parent openly pleads poverty nothing more is said and the child is entered as a free or honorary pupil. When the parent pleads that the minimum fee is more than he can afford a free-will offering is accepted and the matter referred to the discretion of the Membership Committee. It is rarely that this method fails to

stimulate towards full membership and indeed the largest growth of the congregation year by year comes from this source. We are thus educating our people to eliminate the commercialized system of fixed dues and assigned seats, and substituting free-will offerings and unassigned seats. Our Junior Congregation is conducted on this plan. It is the duty of the Membership Committee to follow up these matters to prevent the unscrupulous from taking advantage of the generosity of the congregation.

Q. What would be the standard in determining whether men are fit for pulpit positions? Personality cannot be measured by scholarship or oratory.

A. This is certainly true, and for this reason I believe you should be elected on your record after you have had time to make a record. It is well that the old system has passed away which prevailed when rabbis were scarce and the country was filled with men who went about with recommendations secured by pestering the kind-hearted rabbis of that day. These misfits imposed themselves upon the smaller towns and villages. Every schnorrer who came along and knew the Siddur said he was a rabbi. He was elected and became known as the "Reverend Doctor." This condition has happily become obsolete owing largely to the establishment of this college. The whole standard of the ministry has been raised. This is true not only of scholarship but also of tone and character. By his college record a man must show that there is in him some promise of the realization of the ideals and purposes of the rabbinate. A congregation today can



send to the college and have access to the records of the men who have spent nine years within its walls, and on the basis of these records of achievement the congregation may elect. They take some risk and you take some risk. There is no definite and assured way of determining how you are to select a satisfactory congregation or how a congregation is to select a satisfactory rabbi. Indeed, with all our human failings both will soon discover defects. Do not run away from a place because you find it does not measure up to your expectations. Rather stay and try your mettle by striving to raise the congregation to what you would have it be. You may change and change again, as too many are prone to do. You will never find a community that is ideal. You will but change one series of problems for another.

Q. What other legitimate and moral ways of applying for positions may be mentioned?

A. I can answer only by saying that I have never had experience of any other ways. In earlier days, there were so many pulpits vacant that one had the privilege of choosing. Now that the colleges have supplied the need to such a great extent, these issues have become more acute. Your own judgment, your own sense of what is right, will dictate to you not to engage in any underhand, illegitimate, or political schemes to secure a place. I was prompted to say what I did in my paper because at the Conferences there have come to the surface revelations of matters concerning the filling of vacant pulpits which have made me feel sad indeed. Having been invited to come here, I felt that the opportunity and the place were accorded me to

try to set in your minds and hearts such principles as may help you form a standard of your own and resolve to live up to it no matter what other men may do and no matter how some may lower themselves for the sake of getting ahead.

**Q.** Should a rabbi taken into a congregation require a written contract?

**A.** I have never had a written contract other than the letters that passed between the Board of Officers and me. I know my predecessor had a formal contract when he came from Europe. There were reasons for this. When a man breaks up his home and emigrates to a foreign country, transfers himself and his family to a strange place and among people of whom he has no personal knowledge, probably it is well to have a written understanding—well for both sides. It appears to me, however, that if the ethics of the ministry mean anything, clearly defined verbal agreements ought to be sufficient for both sides. I would answer this question, then, by saying that I see no necessity for a written arrangement, although no harm can be done by having one. You would thereby evade possible misunderstandings, and it might, in many instances, prove mutually advantageous.

**Q.** Would you advise a rabbi to insist on the right and the privilege of attending the business sessions of the congregation and its Board of Directors?

**A.** Not insist, but request. There is a great difference. In your relations with your congregation, do not put yourself into an insistent attitude. Why create antagonism? Remember that you are dealing

with your friends, not with your foes. I said to the president of my congregation, "I should like the privilege of attending a Board meeting." "Delighted, Doctor," he replied, "Next Tuesday." The following Tuesday I was present and when I entered the room the men gathered about the board looked at me in surprise. A rabbi coming to the meeting of the Board of Directors! They had never heard of such a thing. The meeting went on and the president very courteously turned to me, stating, "We have the Doctor with us and perhaps he wants to say something." I said, "Yes, I asked for the privilege because I wished to say something." I told them I was undertaking to work for their congregation, that I had pledged myself to its interest with all the zeal and enthusiasm I possessed and that I therefore wanted to be in a position to serve them best. As it was, I was an outsider and obliged to know what the Board was doing through hearsay. I stated that it would be difficult for me to work for the building up of the congregation socially, financially, religiously, or in any way, if I were to be kept an outsider. I said, "I want to work *with* you men. I do not mean "meddle" with private or executive matters. I am not interested in knowing whether such and such a man pays his dues or not, but I want to know everything that can aid me in furthering the growth of the congregation." At that meeting I was made an honorary member and have attended the meetings ever since. Generally, I find that when I am away errors are apt to occur in dealing specifically with questions of religion or those referring to Jewish matters on which our business men are not apt to be well posted.

**Q.** As a member of your own Board of Directors, what would you do when the question of your salary or contract arises?

**A.** When a question arises that has anything to do with me personally and is to come before the Board, the president simply gives me an intimation. He telephones to me and says, "Doctor, don't come to the meeting tonight." I am not a fool, so I stay away. What I mean to say is, try to be helpful. Do not force yourself unduly into official matters.

**Q.** What arrangements should be made for a vacation?

**A.** This is a local matter. No rabbi, unless he has a contract to that effect, is entitled to a vacation any more than a business man is. To be granted a vacation is a matter of courtesy and I know of no congregation which does not extend this courtesy to the rabbi. It is not a right you can exact. Your services are given to your congregation as they are needed. In your community the angel of death will not wait until you return from your vacation. You probably will be needed for a funeral. Marriages and other functions may, by friendly agreement, be deferred.

I very strongly dissent from those who close up the synagogue and suspend religious services during the vacation period. The congregation is the organized medium for the expression of the religious life of a community and we have no right to close our doors in the face of any soul seeking for the spiritual comfort and strength that may come from participation in communal worship. When you go away, make some

arrangement whereby divine services may be carried on in an acceptable form by some one who, in some fair degree, is equal to the task. That community is poor indeed in which some layman cannot be found who may be trained for the duty. In large cities, the rabbi engages a substitute or makes an arrangement with his colleagues of sister congregations.

Q. In such communities where rabbis hold diametrically opposite views on the same question, is it more advisable for them to agree mutually to maintain silence concerning the disputed question, or would you countenance their continual squabbling, thereby turning the pulpit into a debating forum? Is not such a procedure a waste of time and energy which might better be spent in proclaiming the higher truths of Judaism?

A. I believe that squabbling is always out of order, in the pulpit and out. You and I might disagree on issues concerning which we feel very deeply and happen to hold views diametrically opposite, yet there would be no excuse for our squabbling. We might maintain our views openly, and frankly, and fearlessly, but always as gentlemen. Let me give you a little admonition out of thirty-five years experience. Make this your motto: "Measures, not men." This was the motto of the great religious parliament held in Chicago during the Columbian Exposition in 1893. Fight measures with all the strength you possess, but differentiate between measures and men. They who hold opposing views may be just as honest, honorable, and sincere as you. Therefore, give them credit for the



uprightness of their convictions, and thus show yourself to be a worthy opponent. Personalities are never defensible.

**Q.** What sort of an arrangement or contract should be made between the senior and the junior rabbi?

**A.** I was asked this question recently by one of my colleagues who was about to arrange with a young man from the College to be his assistant. He asked me what arrangement I had with the man who shares my pulpit about dividing the work, etc. I wrote back that we have no arrangements. We try to help each other out. I know that it is possible for two men, who are gentlemen, to get along amicably in the pulpit as well as at the bar or in a factory. Unless there be a basis of mutual confidence and equal loyalty to their work the written contract would be of little avail.

**Q.** What should be the relation between the rabbi and the ministers of other denominations?

**A.** The rabbi ought to seek every opportunity to fraternize with the leaders of other denominations, because this is the way to remove from each other's minds the ignorance which is the root of so many prejudices. We have a club in Philadelphia called the "Liberal Club," made up of laymen and clergymen of various denominations. We have representatives of Friends, Unitarians, Episcopalians, Baptists, Presbyterians, and various other churches, and a number of rabbis and several Jewish professors attend. We meet at a luncheon every other week. We have discussions at which we take up all sorts of live questions of common interest. I never stay away if I can possibly help it, for

I find that the moment a Jew is present the atmosphere is changed. The usual attitude of patronage and criticism is immediately modified and one of respectful consideration for the other man's point of view invades the assembly. Moreover, I find that my horizon is greatly widened and my knowledge enriched by the respectful interchange of views among men whose convictions differ so much from those I hold. Best of all, we learn to respect differences while emphasizing agreements, and thereby find the basis for much helpful co-operation.

**Q.** Should Christians be given places in Jewish choirs?

**A.** This question seems somewhat remote from the topic we have been considering. Nevertheless, I shall be glad to give you my best thought on the subject. We must pay regard to two aspects of the question, viz., that which concerns the artistic and that which concerns the religious motive.

Organist, choir-master, singers, and music committee are naturally bent on providing the most impressive and artistic musical service with which to attune the hearts of the worshipers to prayer. The high standard of the music is with them the chief desideratum; the beliefs or unbeliefs of the singers do not enter into their consideration. It is argued with fairness that music is the one universal language of mankind. It alone obliterates all differences of race, creed, and caste and realizes the aim of religion to unite all human beings in worship of their common Father. Indeed, Christian singers in Jewish choirs, and Jewish singers in Christian choirs, are extending a mutual service of

courtesy and good-fellowship akin to that which is shown by rabbis and clergymen who in these days frequently exchange pulpits. There is an emphasis on their agreements and a tacit understanding with regard to those things on which they disagree.

There is this difference, however, namely, that "the mutual service of courtesy" has its limits. We must not deprive the worship of that complete and thorough-going honesty essential to a divine service, i.e. let none of the factors descend to mere formalism. Therefore, the participation of persons of a different faith as singers, or in any other capacity, should be regarded only as a temporary expedient. Our efforts should be exerted towards encouraging and cultivating the participation of Jewish singers in our choirs. The Boy Choir and the Junior Choir are the direct results of efforts in this direction by my congregation.

**Q.** When invited to a meal at a strange house, would you offer to say grace unless especially asked to do so?

**A.** As a matter of courtesy, the host should invite the minister to give expression to the sentiment of gratitude before partaking of nature's bounties. When the host does not extend this courtesy, the minister cannot with propriety demand it. Moreover, unless it be mere thoughtlessness, the inference must be that the host and his family are not in sympathy with this religious act. To compel it would, therefore, be somewhat intolerant on the part of the minister. Moreover, it would be a barren formula, robbed of its warmth and significance, if it were merely tolerated and not shared

in by the company. While it should be the aim of the minister to keep all occasions upon a plane above the common-place or vulgar, let him not carry his pulpit about with him, as it were, and protrude his profession on others. When you are on sufficiently familiar terms with the family you may fittingly volunteer this service.

Q. Do you consider it just for ministers and divinity students to be exempted from military service?

A. The patriotic impulse which prompts this inquiry does credit to the questioner. The government has given the answer. This answer I should not interpret as a slur on the ministry or as an injustice but, on the contrary, as a profound recognition of the fact that in war, as in peace, the best service that the men in our profession can render is the one for which they are trained.

This war has brought out more clearly than was ever apprehended before, the fact that the men at the front are helpless unless there be men, and women, too, who serve behind the lines. We have mobilized not alone our naval and military forces, but our whole industrial army of workers. Shall we value less the army of workers for the spiritual interests of men, those who are the ultimate guardians of the great moral principles for which we are at war? The religious leaders and those who aspire to become such have as their responsibility the supreme task of keeping the fires of inspiration burning and of leading in the sublime, spiritual experiences of sacrifice, endurance for principle, and the exacting offices of uplifting the depressed, comforting the bereft, and bearing the burdens of the heavy laden. The most trying tasks are reserved for the ministers.

## V

### ISAAC M. WISE, PIONEER LEADER OF AMERICAN ISRAEL\*

AS though it were yesterday, this hour revives the memory of the last time many of us gathered here, nineteen years ago today. Then we came to cluster about the silent form of our master and to receive into our souls the last message of his presence on earth. That message spake with undying eloquence from the mute lips of Death. These consecrated walls re-echoed the grief that welled from our hearts and that found expression in the solemn chant whose words he himself had composed for the Memorial service of the great Atonement Day:

“Es leben deine Todten!  
Sie schweben zu dir nieder  
Als sanfte Friedensboten.”

The inspirations of that deathless hope had been borne into his soul by the sublime prophecy of Isaiah (26:19):

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\*Centenary Address by Dr. Henry Berkowitz delivered at the thirtieth session of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in the pulpit of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun (Plum Street Temple), Cincinnati, Ohio, April 2, 1919.

The lectures on “Intimate Glimpses of the Rabbi's Career” were addressed specifically to young American Rabbis and those preparing to enter the ministry. Their careers were made possible through the vision, the inspiration and the labors of Dr. Isaac M. Wise. His career is the outstanding example and vitally illuminates all the problems of the American Rabbi. As an offering of gratitude to his memory this Centenary discourse is therefore published here with the permission of the Executive Board of the C. C. A. R.



“Thy dead shall live—they wake and sing for joy!  
For thy dew is refreshing as the dew at daybreak,  
When earth's shadows shall flit away.”

Verily, like the dew at dawn has the divine favor, day by day renewed within our hearts the spirit of our great teacher. As the shadows of misjudgment and misunderstanding have flitted away, more and more brilliantly has the light of his spirit gleamed forth in luminous blessings. That light was kindled one hundred years ago on this night in the little village of Steingrub, Bohemia.

So far across a darkened world that little flame hath shed its beams. We who kindled our torches with its fire, who guided our pathways by its light, and cheered our hearts by its glow, now come from all parts of the land to unite on this Anniversary Day in a tribute of honor and gratitude, whose fullness no words can adequately express. How that flame was nourished, what clouds and mists its rays were destined to pierce, what darkness to dispel, and what blessings to radiate, we would recount with reverent thankfulness. A general survey is all I can venture to offer by way of introduction to the detailed treatment of the various phases of the life-work of Dr. Wise, to be presented in the succeeding sessions of the Conference.

Three great tides of new influence passed into the life currents of the world during the century we are reviewing. By them the career of Dr. Wise was mightily determined. These were the forces that inaugurated, first, the political emancipation; second, the

intellectual freedom; and finally, the religious reformation of the Jew from the thralldom of medievalism. Into these currents Dr. Wise directed the course of his people. The rare gifts with which he had been divinely endowed gave him the vision, clearer than that of any of his contemporaries, and the vigor, more lusty in energy and more powerful in execution, that made him, as all now freely acknowledge, the pioneer leader of American Israel. The movement for political emancipation had its earliest beginnings with the rise of the Netherlands. It was first clearly proclaimed in America through our Declaration of Independence. It burst forth in the excesses of the French Revolution, and, sweeping through the lands of Western Europe, brought the first measure of freedom to the Jew. The great intellectual upheaval that created the modern scientific era took its origin in Great Britain. It found its broadest unfoldment in this western world. Here it provided fullest opportunities of participation for the Jew. The movement for Religious Reform brought into existence the liberal branches of Christianity. Among the Jews it received its earliest impulse in the influences that flowed from the brilliant friendship of that noble Jew, Moses Mendelssohn and that peerless Christian champion of religious freedom, Ephraim Gotthold Lessing. But the Reform which had its rise in the post-Mendelssohnian era in Germany developed in America along independent lines. Under the leadership of Dr. Wise it became distinctively hostile to the transplanting of either German or any other form of old-world Judaism to American soil. They are, there-

fore, entirely in error who, today, declare that American Reform Judaism came "out of the poisonous atmosphere of Germany."

Just one hundred years ago, after the battle of Waterloo, the reactionaries came into control. The high hopes that had been aroused by the steady progress of political emancipation were dashed to the earth. Scenes of pillage and persecution were witnessed in the towns of Germany. The "Hep! Hep!" cry resounded about the cradle of Isaac M. Wise. When he was a boy of twelve years of age he was already filled with the spirit of revolt against the whole German system. In 1831 there fell into his hands a publication issued by Gabriel Riesser, of Hamburg, the most courageous advocate of human rights in his day. The little book was eagerly devoured by the lad in secret. "I then learned in that distant village of Bohemia," he wrote when commenting on Riesser's visit to the United States in 1856, "that the Jew also had inborn human rights that must be respected. I still remember how boldly he told the truth to those German county squires, soldiers, and pikemen. Frequently I wept at the wrongs he set forth and the mighty language with which he castigated them."

The legal disabilities of the Jews and the consequent hardships weighed heavily on the youth, ambitious to secure an education. We see him bravely faring forth afoot to the capital city of Prague, carrying his little bundle of clothes and equipped with twenty-seven kreutzers in his pocket. When we consider the hardships of those early years (over which he so willingly

drew the veil of oblivion) we may realize how fortunate were we, his students, in the privileges we enjoyed under his fatherly solicitude. It was through his own indomitable industry and courage and the helpful aid of his teachers, especially Solomon Judah Rappaport and Isaac Noah Mannheimer, that these trials were successfully combatted. In 1842, at twenty-three years of age, he received the Semicha and was called to officiate as rabbi at Radnitz.

His independent spirit speedily asserted itself in his public life. The cruel and inhuman restriction which limited the number of marriages among the Jews he openly violated. Summoned before the imperial council at Prague he boldly denounced the law as immoral. His brave stand brought about its ultimate abrogation. His position grew steadily more irksome. He told in later years of how, dispirited and heart-sick at the stifling of his ideals, he yearned to break away into a freer atmosphere. In vain, prudence sounded its warning note from the lips of his beloved young wife and dependent child.

In an antiquarian book store in the city of Prague he found a collection of American English prints with a set of journals from the year 1780-1790. They were the letters of Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, on the adoption of the Federal Constitution of the United States. "I purchased the whole set," wrote Dr. Wise, a half century later. "I read them with the heart perhaps more than with the reason. That literature made of me a naturalized American in the interior of Bohemia. It inspired in me the resolution to go to America, and,

against the will of my friends, I did go and my family with me."

Perhaps the most pathetic moment in the history of the young immigrant was that of the disillusionment which came to him after his arrival on these shores in 1846. With the glowing fancy of the poet, he had conceived so exalted an idea of the land of freedom that when face to face with the sordidness and pettiness of the realities he found and the discouraging counsels of those he met, his heart sank and gloom enveloped his soul. Out of this torpor he was roused by Dr. Max Lilienthal, then officiating in New York. To him, after some hesitancy, he had presented his letters of introduction. Those of us who recall the inspiring personality of Dr. Lilienthal, his noble bearing, the geniality of his spirit, the ardent enthusiasm that flowed from his every utterance, will readily understand the tribute paid when in his "Reminiscences" (p. 19-20) Dr. Wise later wrote: "The impression I received in the Lilienthal home perhaps decided my career in America."

It was then that he proved himself the man of far-reaching vision. Leaving the lowlands of gloom and despair and clambering to the Pisgah heights of the prophetic outlook, he peered far into the future. Like Moses, whom the Midrash portrays as casting his eyes from Mount Nebo over the Promised Land and forecasting the great events which, under Providence, were there to be unfolded, so Dr. Wise, in vivid anticipation, planned the creation in this promised land of a glorious future for American Israel. With characteristic vigor he set himself at once to translating his vision into a reality. He had found his life's work.



He was to transform the Jew in America into an American Jew. He found the Jew here still a European. There were groups differentiated according to the lands from which they had migrated. There were the earliest comers, the Sephardim or Spanish-Portuguese Jews, Dutch Jews, German Jews, Polish Jews. These groups held aloof from each other and in their separate congregations kept up the distinct Minhagim, the customs and rituals of these foreign countries. Moreover, the timorous, hunted, temper of the European Ghetto still clung to them—whom Longfellow depicted as “The Ishmaels and Hagars of mankind.”

To raise the Jew to self-consciousness; to make him realize that he, the heir of noble traditions, had come at last into the heritage of freedom and was no longer an outcast; to make him lift up his head and walk erect, a man among men; to feel in every pulse-beat of the Jewish heart an answering throb to the inspirations of the New World—this was the ambition that filled the heroic soul of our master. Into that cause he flung his whole being and with unremitting zeal he labored unselfishly for its achievement to the end of his days. Already, in 1848, he issued a challenge to the American Israelites to assert themselves. He scouted their cowardice, he stirred up the public press, he organized indignation meetings, and combatted fearlessly every encroachment on the civil, political, social, and religious rights of the Jew here and abroad. He demanded the full application of the fundamentals of the Declaration of Independence, the complete separation of Church and State, and the removal of every discrimination against citizens

because of their religious faith. In the whole long history of that courageous fight he was the pioneer and leader. From the very first he clearly saw that but little could be achieved by individuals alone and by spasmodic efforts. He pleaded, he argued, he tried, he failed, he tried again and again, to unite the forces of American Israel, until at last, in 1873, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was formed. Among its cardinal objects it undertook to provide means for the relief of the Jews against unjust discriminations. To that end the "Board of Civil and Religious Rights" was created and has been the official medium through which our Americanism has at all times been manfully and effectively asserted. It has stimulated into being the American Jewish Committee and kindred agencies.

In the heart of this achievement lay a still deeper purpose. The Union was to bring to American Israel its vital participation in that second trend of mighty influences that had come to recreate the intellectual life of the world. "July 1st, 1858, separates two epochs in the history of human thought," said that eminent scholar, the late lamented Andrew D. White, in his "History of the Warfare of Science" (Vol. I, p. 67). On that day, two papers were presented at a session of the Linnean Society of London, one written by Alfred Russel Wallace, the other by Charles Darwin. Independently and after years of research in widely separate parts of the globe, both had made similar discoveries in natural history, and, without the knowledge of each other, the two friends had reached identical conclusions and promulgated the Doctrine of Evolution. Then

came that second great movement of the past century. A total revolution of thought was instituted in every domain of human experience and research.

It is difficult for us today to put ourselves into that attitude of mind which prevailed before the law of development was discovered as operative, not alone in nature, but also in history. Now that that principle is regarded as axiomatic, it is impossible for us fully to visualize the intensity of the intellectual combat that raged among the thinking men of the generation to which Dr. Wise belonged.

One day, in his office, I saw him reach across his desk, setting to one side a great mass of theological and other papers, and selecting for perusal a leading American scientific journal. "What!" I asked in surprise, "Do you find time to read a journal of this kind, too?" With his genial smile he replied that he could better afford to neglect all the other periodicals than this which brought to him the real revelations of God's work in the world. This reply was peculiarly significant, for it revealed an attitude of mind towards the new scientific school of thought quite at variance with that which was general. In the Church panic reigned. Ecclesiastics of all Christian sects, in all lands, were united in denouncing the advocates of the new theory as infidels, heretics and atheists. The Doctrine of Evolution was declared to contradict the record of creation in Genesis. The trumpets of alarm proclaimed that violent hands were being laid on the authority of Holy Writ. Biblical criticism, product of the spirit of free inquiry and research, was denounced as anathema.

The Reform synagogue was not torn by any such violent conflicts. The old Mother of Religions had heard many kindred outcries in the past. The descendants of those who had for generations pondered the searching questions of Job, who had calmly met the cynic skepticism of Koheleth and had patiently followed the intricate reasoning of the sages of the Talmud and their successors, kept their poise. "Judaism," says James Darmstetter (*Selected Essays*, p. 274), "is the only religion that has never entered into conflict and never can enter into conflict with either science or social progress, that has witnessed all their conquests without a sense of fear. It salutes with joy the old familiar voices it has heard for centuries."

Intoxicated by their many successes, scientists, led by Karl Vogt and Ludwig Büchner, in the middle of the nineteenth century, over-hastily asserted the Triumph of Materialism. In the spirit of the great rationalistic Jewish Philosophers consecrated fearlessly to the search after truth; in the spirit of Philo, Saadiah, Maimonides, Spinoza, Mendelssohn, did the creative minds in Israel also accept the new challenge of the new day. With them Dr. Wise set himself to do his part in separating the false from the true and in clarifying the eternal harmony that reveals God alike in the sublimities of the orderly course of nature and in the reason and conscience of man. "Fear not the progress of science!" I still hear him call in resonant tones from this pulpit. "Dread not the discoveries of philosophy. Be not terrified by the necessity of advancing from error to truth, for Truth is deathless." His studies and reflec-

tions of many years were set forth in his fundamental philosophy, "The Cosmic God" (1876). At the summit of his intellectual vigor, in 1893, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, he summarized his deepest thought and profoundest convictions in two papers of remarkable clarity and cogency. These he read before the World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago. One was on "Jewish Theology," the other on "Jewish Ethics." His very earliest literary effort, "History of the Israelitish Nation" (Albany, 1854), had stirred up a violent storm because he essayed to treat that history, not as being exclusively ecclesiastical in content, but by applying common sense and reason to differentiate between the religious elements and those which were political, legal or literary.

He faced the problems of the origins and texts of the Biblical books in his "Proanos to Holy Writ." He was one of the first who dared to apply the like canons of criticism also to the New Testament. From his earliest days in America he had been exasperated by the effrontery and importunity of the missionary movement led by credulous pietists and renegade converts. With a temerity few have equalled he exposed their sham and hypocrisy, their ignorance and wilful misconstruction of the records. To this end he spoke and published "A Defense of Judaism Against Proselytizing Christianity," "Judaism and Christianity, Their Agreements and Disagreements," and "The Martyrdom of Jesus." He was one of the first to demonstrate that the birth of Christianity can not be understood without a knowledge of the Judaism of the first century.



Dr. Wise was not a mere closet student, a pedant. He was pre-eminently a teacher. He literally verified the injunction "to learn and to teach, to heed and to act." Not satisfied with propounding his lessons from the pulpit or in printed books, he sent them broadcast, first in Leeser's "Occident," of Philadelphia; then in Lyon's "Asmonean," of New York; and, after his settlement in Cincinnati, in his two great journals, *The American Israelite* and *Die Deborah*.

He had a passion for teaching. When he landed in New York his first occupation was teaching. In Albany, he at once opened a school into which girls as well as boys were received as pupils. The call to Cincinnati interested him largely, because here Judah Touro had endowed a school, The Talmud Yelodim Institute. He kept his clear vision bent with rapt intent from his earliest days in America upon one definite goal. He saw with ever increasing conviction the supreme need of American Israel for a school in which to train teachers and leaders. You know the long, tireless, unremitting, heroic efforts he made, until at last, on October 3, 1875, the Hebrew Union College welcomed us, who were the first of the two hundred students who, in these forty-four years, have passed through its portals and won the honors of ordination. Who that was present will ever forget that memorable July day of 1883 when the first graduation took place! The venerable form of our revered master seemed to rise to majestic stature as he stood in this consecrated place. Here thronged his hosts of friends, those of his beloved congregation and of this city at

large who had shared in all his trials and struggles and had now come to glory in his triumphs. Here were assembled from all parts of the land the delegates to the Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to witness the realization of his cherished dream. It was one of those rare moments of exaltation when our beings are thrilled with the sense of the sublime. Into the souls of us who were favored to receive the hallowed Semicha by the pressure of his lips upon our brows there entered a solemn consecration to the tasks for which he sent us forth and that has made his deathless spirit abide with us in every impulse and motive of our life's work. That work was to center in the fulfillment of the third great purpose Dr. Wise cherished and by which American Israel was to realize in its religious life the great possibilities of its new-found freedom.

When the new light of the scientific era was flashed into the mazes of Jewish history, it revealed the process of evolution that had marked the progress of the centuries! Then a real constructive philosophy of Reform Judaism was discovered. The content of this philosophy Dr. Wise helped to formulate in his "Essence of Judaism." Its spirit constrained in him the necessity of creating the new ritual he called "Minhag America," the pioneer of all kindred efforts that ultimately were harmonized in our "Union Prayer Book." While his great antagonist, Isaac Leeser, was weighing the relative merits of the Sephardic against the Ashkenazic and the Polish Minhagim for use in this country; while Dr. Einhorn, Dr. Samuel Hirsch, Dr. Szold and Dr. Jastrow contended for the retention of German in the services, Wise vigor-

ously opposed them all. He alone had fully emancipated himself from alien control. He alone clearly saw that life was creating here a new and distinctive American Israel. He became the avowed protagonist of an American Judaism. He would have the universal and eternal content of Judaism find expression in a form and spirit consistently and avowedly American.

In that cause he fought the great fight of his life. Mild, kindly, and lovable as he was personally, in the championship of his cause he was aggressive and fearless as a gladiator in the arena. Yet he never harbored personal resentment against an opponent. Herein his example should shame the petty rabbinical squabbles of our day. I recall one who had received many kindnesses from Dr. Wise but who had meanly and cynically attacked him in the press. The man came hither from another city and appeared unexpectedly at the College. We were all greatly agitated at this effrontery. Dr. Wise treated his antagonist with scrupulous courtesy. When later we students expressed our surprise he said, "Under this roof I must observe the laws of hospitality even to a foe."

The intensity of his convictions, his unbounded moral courage, added to his extraordinary powers of initiative and execution, made him the pioneer leader of our reform movement. He enfranchised the Jewish woman, brought her from her place of seclusion in the gallery to be united with husband and children in the family pew. He organized the first choir of men and women and lent to the public worship the emotional appeal of song and the spiritual uplift of music. He brought order

and devotion into the services by insisting on decorum and unison in worship and by preaching in the English language. He brought into recognition the claims of the child in the synagogue and introduced the confirmation to which girls were admitted with the boys.

It would be unfair to one of his strongest motives to infer that in all these innovations he was animated by an over-mastering individualism. If there is any one principle he emphasized more strongly than others from first to last it was his insistence on the force and value of the living tradition. He sought for the support of the consensus of Rabbinical wisdom, experience, and force of character to provide the weight of authority and to lend the impress of its sanction to the new life of the new synagogue in the new world. Alas, how vain were these efforts to secure unity among the Rabbis of his day. In them the individualistic devotion to their varied European heritage was ineradicable. From the first efforts of the Beth Din, to which he was appointed by Lilienthal, through the early conferences at Philadelphia, Cleveland and Cincinnati, he contended for unity, but in vain. His vision discerned that to make union possible he must await the fulfillment of that process by which there was destined to be created here a new generation and outlook. At last in 1899, at Detroit, a group of Rabbis, in full sympathy with his aims and reinforced by the first twenty graduates of the Hebrew Union College, organized the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Seated by his side, as first secretary of the conference, I noted the gleam of pride and satisfaction with which he proclaimed the unani-

mous adoption of the article which declared, "The object of this organization shall be to foster a feeling of association and brotherhood among the rabbis and other Jewish scholars of America, to advance the cause of Jewish learning, and to encourage all efforts towards the propagation of Judaism."

Ten years later, on this very day, the conference assembled here to honor the 80th birthday of its founder and president. As this conference was the last great creation of his genius, so were the honors then bestowed upon him the crowning tributes to his noble life. The entire country shared with us in the lavish outpouring of generous gifts and eloquent tokens. His eye was undimmed and his natural force unabated. His voice rang out clear as a bell when at the midnight hour of our closing festival he spoke to us. Modestly he set aside all the temptations of vain-glory. Do you not still hear, you who were privileged to be present, the prophetic utterance that fell from his lips when he declared that within a quarter of a century the religion of the thinking men of the world would coincide in spirit and in conviction with the ethical monotheism of our prophets which is the essence of Reform Judaism!

Did we attribute his outburst of exuberant optimism to the genial sentiments quickened by the triumphs he had lived to celebrate? Let us not hold so cheaply the serious pronouncements a man makes at the summit of eighty years of life's experiences standing face to face with eternity. As Moses of old, in his parting injunctions to his people, rose to prophetic heights, so did our master when he uttered those words that proved to be



his valedictory to the Conference he had called into being. We can see now how across the century the light that had been kindled in his soul gleamed with fullest brilliancy at the last. Across the two decades that have since passed he seems now to stretch a hand through the silence into this hour. We feel its touch in the moral impulse this commemoration puts upon our spirits.

We are witnesses of the tremendous changes wrought by the world war. These changes have brought American Israel to a place of leadership in the stirring drama of events in which the weal or woe of Israel is being decided. The immediate opportunity and responsibility is at hand to utilize the threefold blessings that are ours, so that their benefits may come to be shared by our brethren in all lands. American Israel, called under the Providence of God to the regal privileges of this land, has already exceeded the boldest dreams of philanthropy by sending her millions in money to succor the broken and helpless Jewries of the old world. These material gifts in whatever measure the call of need may require will surely be given, but they fade into minor significance as compared with the spiritual benefits we must endeavor to bestow.

The notable contribution made by American Jews to our government in the army and navy, in the councils of the nation, and in all fields of civic service at home and abroad, have brought to us rare prestige. And now, for the first time in the whole course of history, the opportunity has arisen to lay the cause of Israel before the Allied Powers of the civilized world in conference at

Paris. Ours is the right and duty to demand that the scandal which has disgraced Christianity these two thousand years shall cease, that the blood of the innocents shed by inquisitions, crusades, and pogroms shall be requited by the granting of full and equal human rights not alone in Palestine but in every land.

Thank God, today, all American Israel speaks in unison at the Peace Conference and blends its appeal with that of our liberated brethren of England and France. A delegation of some of our most eminent leaders has gone abroad, empowered by the president of this conference and by the president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, to combine with the representatives of all the other organizations of American Jews in the demand that guarantees for full emancipation of our people everywhere shall be included in the solemn covenant of the League of Nations. Thus is the vision of union in Israel cherished by our great leader coming true.

“The old order changeth, yielding place to  
the new

And God fulfills Himself in many ways.”

Into this new order that must eventually rise from desolated Jewries of the old world it must be the duty of American Israel to infuse the spirit of that second blessing we have come to enjoy, the spirit of a free and unhampered intellectual life. Reared in this atmosphere our souls revolt against the refinements of cruelty practiced on the sensitive souls of our brethren abroad by the limitation of their privileges of education. But a small percentage of Jews have been permitted to

attend the schools, colleges and universities in eastern Europe, and, as a rule, only subordinate positions were accessible to them in the halls of learning and the professions, even in the lands of western Europe. Against this iniquitous system we must bring to bear every pressure.

Moreover, the general collapse of the European centers of Jewish learning has shifted to American Israel the supreme responsibility for keeping alive the fires of learning here. The Hebrew Union College which pioneered the way for all kindred organizations and movements in this land must still lead in the great work of reconstruction the future will demand. We must see to it that the sunlight and pure air of the era of enlightenment shall penetrate the musty systems of the old world Yeshiboth. Multitudes here and abroad are still subjected to the routine of a dreary formalism which, while it sharpens the intellect, too often leaves the heart dull. The new education we cherish is vital not alone to what stimulates the best endeavors of the mind but also to that which definitely aims to strengthen the moral and spiritual forces for the actual struggle of life. When the emancipation of the mind from the shackles of medieval thought shall have been secured, we shall not fail to see everywhere the onward sweep of that third tide of influence which shall proclaim the religious reformation Dr. Wise predicted for all thinking men and women.

The old autocracy which kept the synagogue bound to the rigid formularies of a final code is destined to fall because there is no final code. We know that to the

unfoldment of the religious life each era has made its own contribution. The unfettered mind apprehends the true values of these tributaries and keeps the stream of progress unclogged. The war has in fact hastened the fulfillment of Dr. Wise's prophecy. The co-operation of all sects and creeds in conserving the religious and moral welfare of our armies and navies has shown that the democracy of religion is now a living issue in the world. America's great experiment in the separation of church and state has proven that spontaneous religious life freed from political domination, is the most ardent and sincere. It has also shown how we can rid mankind of the curse of religious wars and bigotries. We spent ourselves freely and unreservedly in this great war, with the blood of our men and the agony of our women, to help teach the old world the supreme dictum of our ancient prophets that nations no less than individuals must bow to the divine supremacy of the moral law. Twenty-two nations are allied today in one cause, laboring to adjust the future relations of mankind by the solemn covenant of a league, such as Micah and Isaiah foreshadowed, wherein by the eternal standards of right

“God shall judge between many peoples

And shall decide concerning mighty nations afar off;

And they shall beat their swords into plowshares

And their spears into pruning hooks;

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation

Neither shall they learn war any more.”

At a time when these exalted ideals of our faith are brought down from the cloudlands of vision and are

become the practical issues of statesmen and legislators we are amazed to hear the voice of reactionaries ridicule "the mission of Israel." At a time when the Jew, through the sublime principles for which he suffered and endured throughout the ages, is serving as the conciliator and redeemer of mankind, we are blatantly informed by Socialist-Nationalist groups that religion is negligible and subordinate to race, nationality, and culture. Are these then the true prophets and was Dr. Wise a false prophet? Was it all a vain struggle—the agony of his years to loose the bonds and set us free to witness to the world in behalf of the lofty universalism of Israel's faith?

To come hither into the place his presence hallowed for well nigh half a century, of what avail unless we receive in renewed reverence the inspirations of our religion he sought in life to impart to us? To recite the story of his career is but an idle pastime unless thereby we renew our fealty to all that he enshrined in the Union, the College and the Conference his genius created.

By what he wrought in the making of American Israel and American Judaism he has become immortal. Let us, who are privileged to be called his disciples, prove ourselves worthy of the heritage he bequeathed! Strengthened in this hour by the deepened consciousness that his deathless spirit abides with us, we face the task of the future inspired by new courage and exalted by new hope.





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